MALI AND NIGERIA SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS KEY REGIONAL
PARTNERS OF THE UNITED STATES TO FURTHER MUTUAL
INTERESTS FOR ENSURING LONG-TERM SECURITY AND
STABILITY IN THE SAHEL REGION

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Strategic Studies

by

BEKAYE SAMAKE, MAJ, MALI ARMED FORCES
DEUG Histoire et Géographie, Université Aix- Marseille I, France, 2002
Master Degree, Ecole Special Militaire de Saint Cyr, Coetquidan, France, 2005

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2016

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 10-06-2016	2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)* AUG 2015 – JUNE 2016

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Mali and Nigeria should be Established as Key Regional Partners of the United States to further Mutual Interests for Ensuring Long-Term Security and Stability in the Sahel Region	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
Bekaye Samake, MAJ	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301	8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
The West African Sahel, which covers from North to West the Southern Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and Mauritania, has developed over time into a region of significant geopolitical importance. Developed countries motivated either by the Sahel's reserves of strategic resources became involved in the region but now find it necessary to protect their interests and homelands from a variety of hybrid threats manifesting as international terrorism, migrant flow into Europe, or transnational trafficking of South American cocaine, and arms.. These problems become more complex when grafted onto endogenous issues such governance, corruption, extreme poverty, climate change and famine, as well as a more urbanized populations--with marginalized fringes that tend to turn to violence within a context of conflicting interests. The West African Sahel therefore appears as a fertile ground for the expansion of threats, which if left uncheck, will destabilize the fragile Sahel countries and threaten the Western world. Local issues become magnified as state, non-state actors and criminal networks compete for hegemonic control over the region.
This thesis presents a realistic analysis of the West African Sahel situation. It then argues from better understanding of the region that Western countries and their Sahel counterparts must produce a better security cooperation framework for containing hybrid threats, securing and stabilizing the West African Sahel while furthering mutual interests.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Mali, Nigeria, Sahel stability, Unitied States, France, U.S strategy in the Sahel, Terrorism, VEOs

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)	(U)	102	19b. PHONE NUMBER *(include area code)*

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major Bekaye Samake

Thesis Title: Mali and Nigeria should be Established as Key Regional Partners of the
United States to further Mutual Interests for Ensuring Long-Term Security
and Stability in the Sahel Region

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Phillip G. Pattee, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Jeffrey D. Vordermark, M.A.

_____, Member
Michael J. Burke, M.Ed.

Accepted this 10th day of June 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not
necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or
any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing
statement.)

ABSTRACT

MALI AND NIGERIA SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS KEY REGIONAL PARTNERS OF THE UNITED STATES TO FURTHER MUTUAL INTERESTS FOR ENSURING LONG-TERM SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE SAHEL REGION, by MAJ Bekaye Samake, 102 pages.

The West African Sahel, which covers from North to West the Southern Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and Mauritania, has developed over time into a region of significant geopolitical importance. Developed countries motivated either by the Sahel's reserves of strategic resources became involved in the region but now find it necessary to protect their interests and homelands from a variety of hybrid threats manifesting as international terrorism, migrant flow into Europe, or transnational trafficking of South American cocaine, and arms.. These problems become more complex when grafted onto endogenous issues such governance, corruption, extreme poverty, climate change and famine, as well as a more urbanized populations--with marginalized fringes that tend to turn to violence within a context of conflicting interests. The West African Sahel therefore appears as a fertile ground for the expansion of threats, which if left uncheck, will destabilize the fragile Sahel countries and threaten the Western world. Local issues become magnified as state, non-state actors and criminal networks compete for hegemonic control over the region.

This thesis presents a realistic analysis of the West African Sahel situation. It then argues from better understanding of the region that Western countries and their Sahel counterparts must produce a better security cooperation framework for containing hybrid threats, securing and stabilizing the West African Sahel while furthering mutual interests.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

AAA	Africa Aid Afrique
AFC	African financial community
AQIM	Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb,
CENSAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CFA	Communauté Financière D'Afrique CFA.
DIME	Diplomacy, Informational, Military, Economy
DOTMLPF	Doctrine Training Material Leadership Personnel Facility
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States.
FIAA	Islamic Arab Front of Azawad
FNLA	National Front for Liberation of Azawad
G5 SAHEL	Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso for Sahel issues
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFM	International Monetary Fund
IGO	International Governmental Organization
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
MJN	Niger Movement for Justice
MNJ	Mouvement Nigérien pour la justice
MNLA	Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad
NDP :	United Nations Development Program
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
PSPSDN	Programme Special pour la paix et la Securite au Nord Mali" or (the Special Program for Peace and Security in the Northern Mali)

SAP	Structural Adjustment programs
SEC	Security, Exchanges, and Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VEOs	Violent Extreme Organizations
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Sahel or Sāḥil in Arabic, "the Shore of the Sahara Desert," is a semiarid region, which roughly extends from states that border the Atlantic Ocean, Senegal and Mauritania, to those of the Red Sea, Sudan and Eritrea. It covers ten (10) countries and forms a transitional zone in the south of Sahara desert between the Maghreb, North Africa and the sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. From the West coast to the East coast, it comprises Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. However, in regards of what will be forward discussed, this paper will equate the Sahel region to the actual West African Sahel to include Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, the Southern region of Algeria (region), and Mauritania.
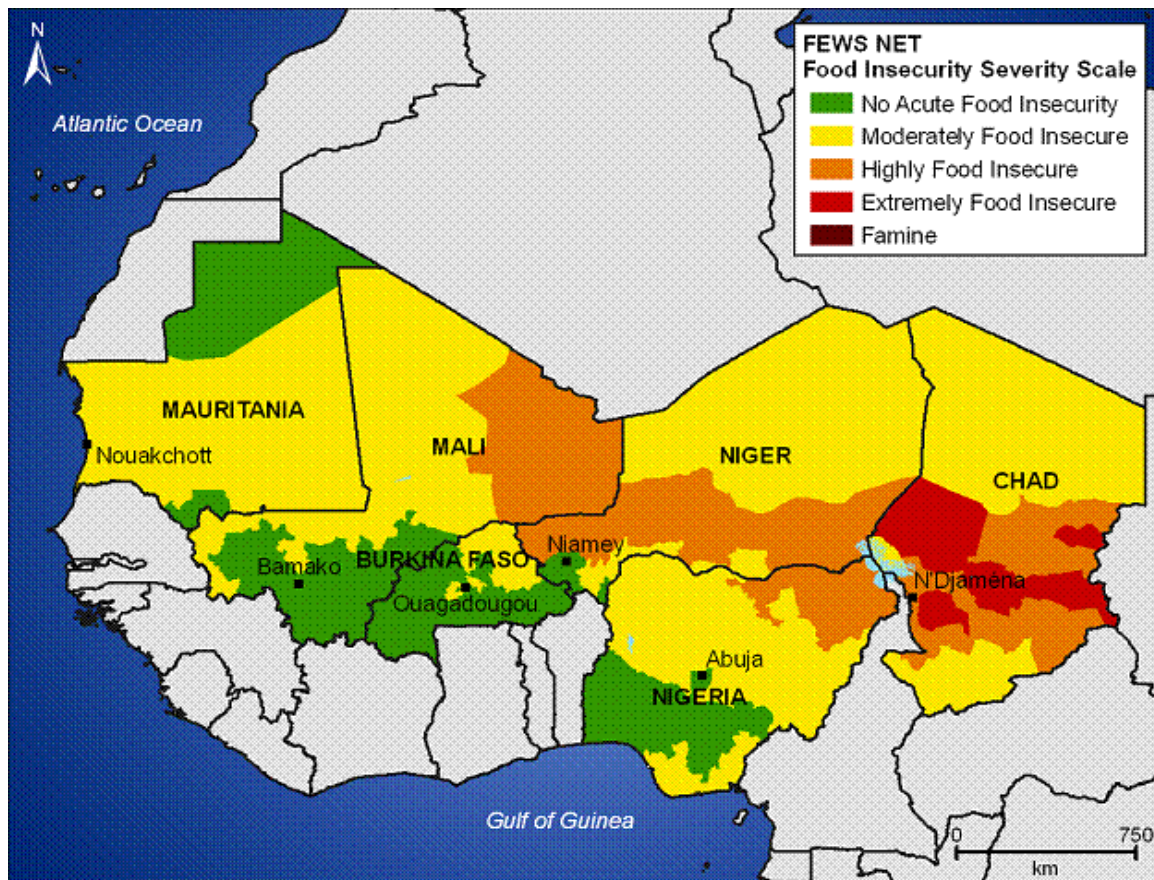
Figure 1.   The Sahel

Source: André-Michel Essoungou, "The Sahel: One Region, Many Crises," *Africa Renewal Online* (December 2013), accessed 9 June 2016, http://www.un.org/ africarenewal/magazine/december-2013/sahel-one-region-many-crises.

The first reported contact between the Sahel region and Europe occurred during the medieval period during the reign of King Musa Keita the First, commonly known as Mansa Musa.[1] At that time when most of Europe was wracked by famine and civil wars, many African kingdoms such the Mali Empire was flourishing. Mansa Musa had strategically connected his empire's natural resources, such as gold and salt, to the

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[1] James P. Oliver, *Mansa Musa and the Empire of Mali* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 58.

Mediterranean Sea through important trade roads. His empire encompassed all or part of the modern nations of Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad. At its height in 1300, Mali was one of the largest empires in the world. In 1324, while taking his pilgrimage to Mecca, King Mansa Musa brought along the longest caravan ever composed of thousands of camels and horses charged with gold, soldiers and slaves. By the time, he returned from his journey (about a year), tales of his amazing wealth had spread to those states along the Mediterranean. The Mali Empire and its king were elevated to legendary status cemented by their inclusion to the 1375 Catalan Atlas, one of the most important world maps of Medieval Europe. The Sahel region was then well-known and admired for its wealth and cultures.[2]

The Mali Empire's power was eventually weakened by palace intrigue that prevented an orderly succession of imperial power, the desire of smaller states to break free of its rule to reap the benefits of the salt and gold trade, and several rebellions. The first people to achieve independence from Mali were the Wolof who resided in what is now the Republic of Senegal; they established the Wolof Empire around 1350. In 1430, the nomadic Tuareg seized Timbuktu in present day northern Mali. This conquest had enormous commercial and psychological consequents; a relatively small, but united group had occupied the richest city in the Empire and one of the major sources of imperial wealth.

However, the greatest challenge came from a rebellion in Gao that led to rise of the Songhai state. The once vassal state to Mali conquered Mema, one of the Empire's

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[2] Djinkerber Mosque built in 1327 by the Andalusian architect to Abu Es Haq es Saheli, who was paid 200 kg of gold by King Musa Keita the First according to Ibn Khaldun, one of the best known sources for 14th century Mali.

oldest possessions in 1465. Three years later, they took Timbuktu from the Tuareg.

Beginning in 1502, Songhai forces, under Askia Muhammad, took control of virtually all

of Mali's eastern possession including the sites for commercial exchange as well as the

gold and copper mines at the southern and northern borders. Even the desperate effort by

Mansa Mahmud III to craft an alliance with the Portuguese failed to stop Songhai's

advances.[3]

The second noteworthy contact between the Sahel region and Europe was during

the colonization era starting in 1879. By the end of the 1890s the Sahel region was

conquered, and became part of the French West Africa[4] with the exception of Nigeria,

which fell under British rules. And Algeria, which was a settlement under the

Governorate status.[5] The relationships between the Sahel and the West were then

dominated to dominator.

These relationships eventually evolved during the decolonization era in the 1960s,

and throughout the Cold war. The relationships between Europe and the Sahel were then

characterized by mutual manipulation in a game of attraction, seduction, repulsion or

revenge. Whereas, the newly independent countries of Sahel wanted to express

themselves and assumed their full independence, President De Gaulle of France wanted

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[3] Oliver, 62.

[4] The Afrique Occidentale Francaise (AOF)–French West Africa was an administrative grouping under French rule from 1895 until 1958 of the former French territories of West Africa: Senegal, French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, and the French Sudan, to which Dahomey was added in 1899. Certain territories of the Sudan were grouped together under the name Senegambia and Niger (Sénégambie-Niger; 1903), which was transformed into Upper Senegal and Niger (Haut-Sénégal-Niger; 1904). http://www.britannica.com/place/French-West-Africa.

[5] Algeria was administered as an integral part of France, much like Corsica.

to reshape "France colonial empire into a Paris-centered community of nations" in order to keep them under France's control.[6] The *communaute francaise d Afrique* was an association of states; during 1958, it replaced the French Union, which had itself succeeded the French colonial empire during 1946.[7]

The French community was made up on several agreements, which accorded certain commercial and political privileges to France within the region, while France in return would have to protect the local governments in case of aggressions. "In a referendum in 1958, France had made it clear to its colonies that it would permit no middle ground between full cooperation within a French community or total independence with no ties to France."[8] Unfortunately, Guinea, the only country to choose "total independence," would suffer heavily for what French officials perceived as a challenge, and this "breakout from France's political hegemony did not elicit any immediate American recognition."[9] Therefore, during the 1960s and the Cold War, West Africa became an extension of the strong geopolitical orientation of French policy in Africa, and probably cemented towards a Gaullist antipathy towards Anglo-Saxon "issues."[10]

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[6] Helen Kitchen, *Some guidelines on Africa for the Next President* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic International Studies, 1988), 16-20.

[7] Alfred William Brian, *Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[8] Earl Conteh-Morgan, "Post-Cold War West Africa: Implications for US Foreign Policy," in *United States Interests and Policies in Africa: Transition to a New Era*, ed. Karl P. Magyar (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 50.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 51.

During this same period of time, the US viewed the Sahel region as a peripheral concern. Its attitude towards the region, despite its advocacy for "self-determining" principles, remained ambiguous and highly pragmatic in regards to European colonial powers. The US focused on developing markets where US products could be sold and raw material accessed. This ambivalence eventually pushed some African countries towards the Communist Bloc.[11]

By the end of the Cold War, the Sahel environment was wracked by extreme poverty subsequent to the failed economic reforms, foreign debts, military coup d etat and civil wars. As the region became a fertile ground for all sort of illicit trafficking, the West's attitude remained almost unchanged as long as the Western interests were safe.

However, by early 2000s, especially after the 9/11, the Sahel region and the West entered their third significant interactions as international terrorists were looking to plug into different regions such as the Sahel, where they could target Western vital interests, carry out human trafficking by kidnapping Western nationals or turning illegal immigrants into mules for transporting and selling drugs to Europe. From 2004 to 2014, assuming that the fragile Sahel countries were unable to take care by their own multiple layered transnational challenges, which then became a major international security concerns, the region gradually regained some attentions as the ripples effects of the Sahel issues impacted Western societies. Thus, several Western countries, particularly France and the United States, intervened[12] financially and militarily in the Sahel both to ensure

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[11] Karl P. Magyar, ed., *United States Interests and Policies in Africa: Transition to a New Era* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 13.

[12] Stephanie Sanok Kostro and Meredith Boyle, *French Counterterrorism in the Sahel: Implications for U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic International

regional stability by assisting the Sahel states, and to secure Westerners access to strategic resources such as uranium ore exploited by the major French firm AREVA.[13] Nevertheless, despite the multiplication of actors, initiatives and resources invested, the Sahel security environment steadily degraded to become a "complex security environment."[14] The local governments are currently simultaneously confronted with multilayer challenges in a context of ruthless competitions between state and non-state actors in order to advance their interests. The Sahel region has become a Chinese puzzle, where, local threats morphed to transitional hybrid threats when the international crime organizations with a growing segment of terrorist groups, international cocaine smugglers plugged into local populations and set safe rear bases to further their activities. In this circumstance, the current effectiveness of western interventions is questionable.

At this stage, predictions on the Sahel region future embed a high level of uncertainty. In fact, according to *statistiques mondiales* from 2004 to 2014 the population of the Sahel augmented by 30 percent[15] in average, whereas the agricultural production underwent significant deficit due to climate change, the degradation of arable soils, and the rural exodus. Meanwhile, during the same period the urban population of the region

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Studies, 2014), 22, accessed 24 May 2016, http://csis.org/publication/french-counterterrorism-sahel-implications-us-policy.

[13] Areva is a French multinational group specializing in nuclear power and renewable energy headquartered in Paris La Defense.

[14] See chapter 1, definitions.

[15] Fiat Panis, *La crise alimentaire et nutritionnelle du Sahel: l'urgence d'appuyer la résilience des populations vulnérables* (FAO: Cadre Stratégique de réponse régionale, Version II, April 2012), 54, accessed 7 February 2016, http://www.fundacionrinaldi.org/ftp/Documentos/Socios/La%20crisis%20del%20Sahel.Frances.pdf.

grew from 84 million in 2004 to 134 million people in 2014, an increase of more than 54 percent in 10 years.[16] This massive urban migration compounded by the extreme poverty and other vectors went in parallel with the appearance of slums and an increase of urban crimes. In addition, during the decade 2004- 2014, every single Sahel country experienced a major crisis. Thus, Algeria was hit in 2006 when a local terrorist group the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) pledged allegiance to Al-Qaida and became in Al-Qaida the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). 2007 to 2010 was Mauritania's turn to be highly challenged by local contestation and AQIM.[17] Meanwhile Niger was facing the rebel group of Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ) from 2006 to 2010. The National Front for Liberation of Azawad (NFLA -Mali), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad(Mali) and the Autonomous Base of the United Front for Liberation of Azawad(Mali) continuously struck Mali from 2006 to 2012. Boko Haram, which operates in Nigeria, was born during 2004 but gained in power to challenge the Nigerian government within a few years.

The case of Mali in 2012 is the most intriguing. On March 22, 2012, the world was surprised when Mali, one the promising democracies in West Africa was overthrown by a military coup. About a week after the Coup, the Malian Armed forces conceded 60 percent of the national territory to the Tuareg insurgents of National Movement for the

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[16] World Bank, "World Development Indicator," accessed 27 April 2016, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators&Type=TABLE&preview=on#.

[17] Jean-Pierre Filiu. *Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2009), 1-16, accessed 27 April 2016, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/al-qaeda_islamic_maghreb.pdf.

Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) supported by a coalition of several terrorist groups, led by Ansar Dine on behalf of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and international drug smuggling groups.

This incident in Mali triggered the debates on the fragility of the Sahel countries as well as the impact of those security issues in regards of Western interests. During the year 2012 to 2013, while the officials of Azawad state were looking for international recognition and established diplomatic relations with France, Switzerland, Germany and Qatar, the Malian transitory government failed to convince the international community on the real danger. By July 2012, the terrorist coalition led by AQIM got rid of Tuareg insurgents of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) their former allies to remain the only major power in North Mali. Thus, AQIM and its affiliated Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) controlled the north of Mali. By December of 2012 the VEOs resumed their expansions south towards the Malian capital city of Bamako, and north towards the southern region of Algeria. They would likely take over Bamako if the French had not intervened to stop their advances on 11 January 2013.

In the same period of time, Boko Haram galvanized by the victory of AQIM in Mali, launched its major campaign to defeat Niger's, Nigeria's and Cameroon's Armies and established several controlled territories throughout Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon Territories. On the 16th January the Katiba of Abdul al Nigeri one of Mokhtar Belmokhtar senior lieutenant attacked , took expat hostages at the Tigantourine gas facility near In Amenas Algeria (30 km from Libya border), in response to the French military operations against AQIM in Mali. With the French intervention, the terrorist groups in Mali rapidly reach culmination in late February 2012. However, those series of

coordinated attacks revealed the scale of security threats within the Sahel, the urgency of the situation and triggered the debate on the fragility of the Sahel states, the regional stability, and the role of Western countries, specifically France and the USA. The former in regards of the forum it had provided to the Tuareg rebellion and its influence over the zone. And the latter was questioned on the effectiveness of its financial and military support to stability in the region through the Department of State and the Department of Defense.

The situation in Mali not only fired up the debates on the degradation of the Sahel security environment, the urgency of the situation, but also on the difficulties in intervening in such a place during a time of budget constraints when major international actors focused on East Europe (where Russia was intruding) or the Levant (where ISIS had just reduced 10 years of enduring efforts in Iraq into nil).

Today, in of view of the recent terrorist attacks in In Amenas (16 January 2013, 39 foreign killed), Paris (13 November 2015, 139 killed), Bamako (20 November 2015, 20 killed), Ouagadougou (15 January 2016, 29 killed), Grand Bassam Ivory Coast (13 March 2016, 16 killed) Brussels (22 March 2016, 32 killed) the international security community is now in disarray. One can argue that the Sahel is at crossroads, because if not assisted there is no guarantee that the Sahel states could resist to these threats, and no one could predict with certainty their impacts on the West. And yet, paradoxically with important strategic resource reserves the Sahel region holds some of the world's fastest growing economies. Jide Wintoki in his article "Africa and the Global Economy: The Last Frontier?" notes that on the IMF's 2014–2018 annual average GDP percent growth projection rate across selected world regions, the Sub-Saharan Africa is first, and among

the projected fastest growing economies are Mauritania (ranked 9, with 8.7 percent) and

Nigeria (ranked 26, with 6.9 percent).[18]

Within this paradox regarding the current Sahel situation a genuine opportunity

exists to reestablish the balance among the stakeholders, while defeating the Violent

Extremist Organizations (VEOs) to secure the Sahel states and bolster the stability

mechanisms to further mutual interests between the Sahel and the West.

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, the study aims to provide an overall

understanding of the Sahel security environment by identifying the dynamics and trends,

the stakeholders as well as their patterns of interactions. The next goal will be to evaluate

the current security cooperation activities in order to discuss whether or not the current

strategic postures are enough to contain the hybrid threats present in the Sahel. Finally,

this study will examine alternative mechanisms to improve the effectiveness and

efficiency of existing security cooperation frameworks. The ultimate outcome of this is to

identify stability mechanisms that allow steady economic development while furthering

national interests between the Sahel countries and the West in a relative low cost-benefit

ratio.

<u>Research Question</u>

Primary Question

Is the current level of security cooperation between the Sahel countries and the

West (the US and France) sufficient to enable stability; allow steady economic

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[18] Jide Wintoki, "Africa and the Global Economy: The Last Frontier?" (Lecture, University of Kansas, School of Business, January 2016), 1-35.

development, and further national interests between the Sahel countries and the West in a relative low cost-benefits ratio?

Secondary Questions

1. What does the current security environment look like?

2. What are the current cooperation activities in the Sahel?

3. What should guide a comprehensive strategy for Sahel region?

4. What are the prospects for increased US involvement in the Sahel?

5. What national interests are converging, and diverging, between these African countries, the USA and France?

6. What should an integrated strategy for Sahel look like?

7. What makes Mali and Nigeria best suited for regional key partner role?

Assumptions

The demand for illegal drugs in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and North America will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. This will motivate the international smuggling networks to transit more drugs through the Sahel as the region currently represents the best cost-benefit ratio for traffickers. Additionally, West African countries will continue to have weak governmental structures, limited resources, and an inability to effectively monitor or enforce their borders without significant assistance.

In order to make projections about the future security environment, security cooperation activities during the next decade are assumed to follow the pattern set in the decade 2004- 2014. Security cooperation activities do not evolve to cope with the evolution of the current threats and diminish them, therefore the Sahel is likely to become increasingly chaotic as Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) will gain control of

substantial parts of national territories and develop their criminal activities. Such a situation will challenge Europe and the United States in unprecedented ways as the accumulation of new threat vectors, compounded by the countries interdependence through a global economy system and the physical proximities will further expose the Western societies, national interests and homelands to more unexpected threats coming from the Sahel.

France will remain the main military power capable of securing the Sahel region. Despite its waning political influence within the region, current political debates in France concerning whether or not the country should tighten its migration policies will increase over time as more and more French adhere to the nationalist trend. French foreign policy must take into account emerging dynamics, and will likely be challenged by the Sahel states during the next decade.

In regards of the global security situation, Western interests will remain relatively consistent and therefore will be served if the US and its European allies continue to support the Sahel states in their initiatives to take over their domestic and transnational issues, and consolidate the achievements.

<u>Definitions</u>

<u>Strategic Environment</u>: The strategic environment is characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and rapid change, which requires persistent engagement. This environment is fluid, with changing alliances, partnerships, and new national and transnational threats constantly appearing and disappearing. In addition to historical conflicts significant challenges continue, to include emerging peer competitors, irregular warfare (IW), catastrophic terrorism employing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and threats to

disrupt both Sahel and Western Nations' ability to project power and maintain its qualitative edge.[19]

National power instruments: This refers to all of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational and military (DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 2006).The instruments of power, together, are commonly referred to as DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic), and are employed by states to achieve their interests. States usually employ the three peaceful instruments in their interaction with other states and only resort to use of the military instrument as a last resort to settle differences. According to Harry R. Yarger, Professor of National Security Policy in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College, strategy is the pursuit, protection, or advancement of a nation's interests through the application of the instruments of power.[20]

Hybrid threat: "Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a tailored mix of conventional, irregular, terrorism and criminal means or activities in the opational battle space. Rather than a single entity, a hybrid threat or challenger may be a

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[19] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-l, *Joint Operations*" (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011): 1-204, accessed 19 February 2016, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_0.pdf.

[20] Harry R. Yarger, "The Strategy Appraisal: The Key to Effective Strategy," in *US War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy*, ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 51-64, accessed 19 February 2016, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/ pdffiles/PUB870.pdf.

combination of state and non-state actors."[21] Most recently, the US Army codified the term in its 2011 operations doctrine as, "The diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, criminal elements, or a combination of these forces and elements all unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects."[22]

Complex Security environment: A complex security environment exists when different types of local, regional and international actors with significant influence compete for interests and state-like power in a specific area. The complex security environment encompasses both the geographical and human dimensions. It cannot be described by a single rule and its characteristics are not reducible to one level of description. The dynamics that emerge from the interactions cannot be predicted with certainty since they are depend on actors' temporary goals.

Army Design Methodology (ADM): A methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe problems and approaches to solving them. ADM is particularly useful as an aid to conceptual planning, but must be integrated with the detailed planning typically associated with the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) to produce executable plans.

Key concepts that underline ADM include:

1. Critical and creative thinking

2. Collaboration and dialogue

3. Framing

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[21] Dr. Glenn Russell, "Thoughts on Hybrid Conflict," *Small Wars Journal*, March 2009, accessed 30 March 2016, http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/03/thoughts-on-hybrid-conflict.

[22] U.S. Army, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations* C-1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2011), 1-5.

4. Narrative construction

5. Visual modeling

ADM entails framing an operational environment, framing a problem, and developing an operational approach to solve the problem. ADM results in an improved understanding of the operational environment, a problem statement, initial commander's intent, and an operational approach that serves as the link between conceptual and detailed planning. Based on their understanding and learning gained during ADM, commanders issue planning guidance, to include an operational approach, to guide more detailed planning using the MDMP.[23]

PMESII: The U.S. Army doctrine often uses six interrelated operational variables to analyze the operational environment. Known as PMESII, the six operational variables are: Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure.

The U.S. military doctrine writers added Physical Environment and Time as additional factors to consider in defining an operational environment. Some military personnel prefer another tool, known as ASCOPE, to define an operational environment. ASCOPE stands for Area, Structure, Capabilities, Organizations, People and Events. Additionally, U.S. military leaders use METT-TC to reflect mission variables which are contrived from the environmental factors (PMESII) but specifically apply to a given mission. METT-TC stands for Mission, Enemy, Terrain and Weather, Troops and Support, Time Available, and Civilian Considerations. U.S. Army Field Manuals 5-0, 3-0, and even 5-2 Design advocate PMESII, PMESII-PT, ASCOPE, or METT-TC as

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[23] U.S. Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 5-0, *Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012).

methodologies to ascertain a better understanding of an environment. Furthermore, these methods are generally categorized as sub steps to a larger process. For example, according to FM 5-0, one can use METT-TC (or PMESII) during the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield process which consists of four additional steps and is a part of the larger Military Decision Making Process.

Afro-pessimism: First refers to a sense of pessimism about the African nations' abilities to overcome pressing challenges by their own such as governance, corruption, security, poverty, health and development.[24] It advocates for assistances that are more western and interventions in the African continent and reduce the role of the local governments to execution.

Afro-optimistic: Refers to the optimism about the future of Africa. It is based on the assumption that Africa has a bright future because of its potentialities: young populations, abundant resources, new markets. It also argues for African ad hoc solutions to African problems.[25]

Afro-constructivism: The claim that significant aspects of African international relations are historically and socially constructed, rather than inevitable consequences of human nature or other essential characteristics of world politics. It primarily argues that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than

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[24] Toussaint Nothias, "Definition and Scope of Afro-Pessimism: Mapping the Concept and Its Usefulness for Analyzing News Media Coverage of Africa," African Studies Bulletin, January 2013, accessed 19 May 2016, https://www.academia.edu/ 2966117/Definition_and_scope_of_Afro-pessimism_Mapping_the_concept_and_its_ usefulness_for_analysing_news_media_coverage_of_Africa, 54.

[25] Ebere Onwudiwe and Minabere Ibelema, *Afro-Optimism: Perspectives on Africa's Advances* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 1.

material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature."[26] Hence, for Afro-constructivists the future of Africa lays in the balance of power between nations and the readjustment of African and former colonial powers' relations.

Limitations

Given the time constraints to complete this paper, the anthropologic and social aspects in the region, even though significant in Sahel studies, have not been covered in depth.

Due to the shortage of data needed to conduct a deliberate performance evaluation of the security cooperation in the Sahel, the author used when necessary the deductive method to infer the outcomes. The deductive method is a scientific method, which departed from a hypothesis, compares it to general principles and theorems in order to deduct the observable consequences.[27]

Due to the nonexistence of National Security Strategy document for Nigeria and Mali, official publications were used instead. However, the African politics being personalized in general, there are potential biases according to the political leadership personal experiences and feelings while dealing with foreign affairs. Therefore, the reader is advised that some explanations are relevant only during specific timeframe and in their particular context.

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[26] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

[27] Merriam Webster, "The deductive method," accessed 8 May 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deductive%20method.

Due to the author's origin and previous work, experiences in dealing with the security issues in the Sahel, it is possible the investigation has some statements that may be subject to bias.

Scope and Delimitations

Geographically the Sahel Band or Sahel Region stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in Senegal and Mauritania to the Red Sea in Sudan and Eritrea. However, in regards to the study purpose, the scope has been refined to equate the Sahel Region to roughly West African Countries to include Nigeria, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinee, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Algeria (South region).

At this stage, the author anticipates that the multitude of actors with no coordination and even conflicting interests may hinder any endeavor to stabilize the Sahel region. The actors can divided categorically into state and non-state. Each one of these two groups may be divided into indigenous and external actors. Within the indigenous segment, there are political, religious and traditional leaders. As for the external segment, there are states: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs), private economic actors and institutional economic ones such as International Monetary Funds (IMF) or the World Bank, and finally the international institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the African Union (AU). The multiplication of actors increases the variables and the complexity of the Sahel security environment. Therefore, there will always be a fair degree of uncertainty in the attempt to predict the outcomes.

The next set of issues is tied to the political immaturity of the African Sahel countries and the subsequent mutual misunderstanding and misinterpretations when it

comes to cooperation between the West and the Sahel. For instance, Sahel politics are typically individual-centric, whereas the Western tradition is institution-centric. The former concentrates the power around an individual or a clan with a personification of power, which triggers continuity issues in the long run. While the latter is carried out according to a constitutional framework with a national security strategy plan. Furthermore, the personification of power also impacts volatility of the political environment in a sense that a five-year period is considered long term (equate to a presidential mandate) in the Sahel, whereas it is short term when it deals with the US National Security Strategy for example. This is all the more important that there are so many interrelated issues that the Sahel governments trend to be bogged down in daily crisis management. So that they shift priorities and they do not or simply cannot allocate the resources needed for future, planning or research and development. Those resource shortages do not only concern the material aspect, they encompass the human aspect also, especially in regards to two factors: competency and health. The spread of epidemics such as AIDS or EBOLA impact the work forces as well.

Corruption is another major issue, which hinders western and Sahel relationships. The definition and delimitation of corruption differs greatly from Sahelian to Western perspectives. For instance, whereas, some existing traditional protocols in the Sahel demand a present (even symbolic) during visits with an official, such a behavior can be interpreted in western conception as a form of bribery. Therefore, the challenge will consist in finding a common definition of corruption.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is double: first identify the flaws in the approaches, which prevent the ongoing cooperation activities from meeting the expectations. Next, discuss the ways to secure the Sahel region, enable lasting development mechanisms while furthering mutual interests of both the Sahel and western countries.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The challenge of this study is to determine, from any identifiable pattern in the relationships among Sahel and Western countries, a winning formula or strategy that combines the necessity to secure the Sahel countries from hybrid threats, enable stabilization mechanisms, with the necessity to further mutual West- Sahel strategic interests. Chapter 2 furnishes the key variables and driving principles for better understanding of the Sahel security environment and the relationships between the Sahel countries and the Western ones.

The review has been conducted using unclassified and open source materials available through the CARL Library at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. It does not include any interviews. The review is concerned primarily with literature available from the end of the colonial period (1955 and the Bandung conference) to the current time 2016. Whereas a few seminal books formed its historical backbone, the review focuses on the evolution of the national security strategies and their derived policies for the Sahel region. The collection method concerns all type of publications with exception of interviews and assimilated publications. The goal being to detect any tendency and its impacts on policy formulation for the Sahel region.

At this stage, several observations are worth noting. First, as rule the Sahel countries do not publish a comprehensive strategic document comparative to the United States National Security Strategy (NSS) or France's White Paper on defense and national security. The Sahel countries typically offer official publications in form of single focus on a particular subject such as counterterrorism, or economic development strategies.

Second, to understand some mechanisms behind current dynamics within the Sahel region and the interactions with the West, USA and France in particular, it is necessary to start from the 1960s, which correspond to the decolonization era, as the colonization constitutes a heavy load of griefs with significant impacts on the relationship between the West, especially France, and the Sahel.

Third, from the 1960s, end of colonization to the present, the thoughts and approaches for strategies and policy formulation for the Sahel have evolved according to three major schools of thought, which are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs. The first is the Afro-pessimistic school of thought. It took place after the end of Second World War when the colonies, galvanized by their role in saving Europe, requested their freedom. The Afro-optimistic is the second school of thought. It basically appeared at the same period with the Afro-pessimism as a counter argument, but did not reach significant audiences outside the pan Africanist circles till early 2000. The third school of thought is the Afro-constructivism. It is recent and has started somewhere during the first decade of the 2000, when the euphoria of the war against global terrorism started to fade when Obama became U.S. President and began assessing and adjusting Bush's war on terror approach.

Last, from the U.S., European states to the Sahel countries, not to mention the international institutions such as the UN or the AU, there are several different "strategies

for the Sahel."[28] However, regardless their origin these strategies for the Sahel share in general four key tenets as follows:

1. The security and development in the Sahel nations cannot be separated, and helping the Sahel states achieve security is integral to enabling their economies to grow and poverty to be reduced.

2. Achieving security and development in the Sahel is only possible through closer regional cooperation.

3. The fragility of Sahel governments impacts on the stability of the region and their abilities to effectively combat both poverty and security threats.

4. The threats the Sahel states are facing are transnational, therefore if not contained they will directly affect other regions such as the Maghreb, Europe and eventually the U.S.

Therefore, this study defines the strategy for Sahel as the Sahel nations, Europe and the U.S. common endeavors in order to disrupt, dismantle the VEOs within the Sahel region, contain the threats and prevent their expansions to others regions such as the Maghreb, Europe or the U.S. A common endstate for this Sahel strategic objective would eventually be: to defeat the VEOs and their illicit trafficking affiliates, dismantle their nexus with the local populations in order to secure the Sahel nations, ensure the security of western citizens and interests.

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[28] Damien Helly, et al., *Sahel Strategies: Why Coordination Is Imperative*, (Institute for Security Studies, Policy Brief no. 76, March 2015), 1-12, accessed 24 May 2016, https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/PolBrief76Eng.pdf.

This chapter will present literature according to three schools of thought, as well as their implications on policy formulation for the Sahel. Then, the author will wrap up the findings and point out the eventual gaps, which the actual study aims to fulfill.

<u>The Afro-pessimistic school of thought</u>

The Afro-pessimistic school of thought was dominant in the 1950s and especially in during the 1960s soon after the Sahel states got their independence. It was primarily a justification to hold African states under colonial powers influences. It was based on the international realism theories, with a particular tendency to focus on colonial and regional hegemony.[29] It was founded on both the doubts about the Africans' ability to government themselves, while facing pressing challenges such as education and shortage of capable leaders, poverty, and structural issues,[30] and the argument that European approaches to regional affairs were better suited for the Sahelian development.

1786 marked the U.S. first interests in Africa when the newly independent United States of America was officially recognized by Morocco. However, the U.S. relationships with the black continent was limited to "anthropological curiosity" before the Cold War[31] and distant but cordial during most of the Cold War. Whereas in the Post-cold War period the "White House's annual statement National Security Strategy (1988) identified the need to maintain military access to United States facilities" in support of the strategic interests in Africa. which implied an improvement of the U.S. political activities in Africa

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[29] Department of State, *United States Foreign Policy 1972: A Report of the Secretary of State* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1973), 460-461.

[30] Nothias, 54.

[31] Magyar, 1.

based on depriving the Soviet camp from implanting, influencing the new states, gaining voting strength in UN, development human right, appeasing America's black community concerns. However, the U.S. did not initially "anticipate correctly the consequences of the expansion of the global system to include the new states of Africa"; resulting in a truncated perception of these new African states with the U.S. Cold War, strategic requirements lens not so much in accordance of those countries basic needs.[32]

The Afro-pessimism argues in favor of imposing western solutions, while implementing political and economic reforms to solve the Sahel issues and help the region develop. This remained the case even though, Afro-pessimists recognized that the United States and Africa strategic relationships, especially the North part were uneven and country dependent. For example, the U.S. had provided Egypt with "two billion aid dollars annually" whereas Libya, which was considerate as "a pariah state" did not receive the U.S. official assistance.[33] The ambiguity resulted from the four phases the U.S. foreign policy towards Africa underwent. During the first phase, also called "formative," the U.S. foreign policy in Africa was based on both the political realism and the idealism, as this politic although supported the "rights of people to determine their own destinies," and it remained highly pragmatic as for the attitude to adopt in regards to European colonial powers. The relations with North Africa for example focused on developing markets where the U.S. products could be sold and the raw material accessed. From the World War I to the Cold war the U.S. foreign policy towards Africa entered its

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[32] Magyar, 13.

[33] Ibid., 15.

second phase, also known as "Self-determination."[34] During this period, the U.S. foreign

policy remained pragmatic. Although the U.S. claimed the self-determination principle, it

did not invest in relationships with the African nations outside the security framework.

For example, the relations between the U.S. and North Africa were focus on North

African states' geostrategic importance from the Second World War to Cold War. During

the Cold War, the U.S. African policy entered its third phase, as the country tried to

maintain its European allies while responding to the African countries' independence

aspirations. This ambiguity in the U.S. foreign policy negatively impacted the U.S.

credibility in Africa, and resulted in pushing many African leaders to the Soviet bloc as

they viewed the communist parties such as Cuba more supportive for their fight for

independence.

On political spectrum, the Afro-pessimism drove Western interventionism

policies in Africa in general and in Sub-Saharan region in particular. For instance from

1958, the independence of Guinea Conakry of Sekou Toure to 1994 the genocide of

Rwanda, European countries (especially France and the United States) intervened

militarily 45 times. Some operations lasted only few day whereas others resulted in major

military operations and sponsored military coup d etat.[35]

Furthermore, Conteh-Morgan noted that before the 1950s the U.S., with exception

to Liberia, either perceived Africa as a far land with no real interest (before the Cold

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[34] Magyar, 15.

[35] Olivier Fourt, "1960-2010, 50 Ans D'interventions Militaires Françaises En Afrique," Radio France International August 2010, accessed 19 May 2016, http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20100714-1960-2010-50-ans-interventions-militaires-francaises-afrique.

War) or a potential "decisive factor in conflict between the forces of freedom and the international communism." The State Department Bureau of African Affairs was established only in 1958, and its policy towards West Africa was "based on the assurance, and predicated on the belief, that communism posed no threat to Western interests in the Sub-region." In general, the U.S set back towards West Africa was due to two factors: "the exigencies of French African policy and growing strains in Franco-American relations."[36] Indeed, France strongly discouraged any "American cultural or economic encroachments." For instance, "in a referendum in 1958, France had made it clear to its colonies that it would permit no middle ground between full cooperation within a French community or total independence with no ties to France." Unfortunately, Guinea the only country to choose "total independence" would suffer heavily for what French officials perceived as a challenge, and this "breakout from France's political hegemony did not elicit any immediate American recognition" (50). Therefore, "West Africa had become an extension of the strong geopolitical orientation of French policy in Africa since 1960, and probably cemented towards a Gaullist antipathy towards Anglo-Saxon issues."[37]

Eventually, with accession of the Kennedy Administration U.S- West Africa relations got into a positive spirit, as the sub-region became the second focus for this administration after the Philippines. However, the overall U.S- West African policy was

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[36] Conteh-Morgan, 50.

[37] Ibid, 52.

guided by first the need to counter Soviet expansion while avoiding any strong

interference in French former colonies.[38]

After the Cold War, the U.S policy towards West Africa has been influenced by

"the global systemic imperatives and significant domestic developments." As a result,

U.S- West Africa policy has juggled between incoherence and substance in a kind of

political vacuum.[39]

On economics spectrum, Afro-pessimism mainly translated into imposed

economic reforms, especially during the 1980s after most African countries failed their

economic revolutions via socialism or Marxism, and struggled back to the liberal system

after the USSR cut down its sponsorship. That gave alibis to the West, especially

European countries, to regain control over the African natural resources and markets

through the IMF and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) during the

1980s. As a result, the security environment in West Africa deterred significantly, as

these countries were overwhelmed by simultaneous challenges such as governance and

rebuilding, corruption, economic austerity due to the SAPs and the burden of debts.[40]

By early 2000 Afro-pessimists arguments had more and more difficulties dealing

with the facts of the Sahel region. In fact, African states, with few exceptions like Ghana,

after forty years (40) of SAPs and imposed agendas were struggling with governance

issues, education, health issues, border disputes or internal rebellions, but above all the

economics environment did not flatter the outcomes of the SAPs. On its guard page of

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[38] Ibid., 52.

[39] Ibid., 53.

[40] Ibid.

May 13, 2000 publication, the Economist referred to Africa as the "Hopeless Continent."[41]

The risk with the Afro-pessimistic approaches and solutions is that it neglects first the importance of the endogenous dynamics as it has been pointed out in the Elysee 2007 report on France and West African nations 'relationships.[42] Second, it elaborates on the fallacies of the West abilities to significantly influence or deal African affairs instead of Africans themselves. In fact, it turned out that the black continent is "not a receptive region for implementing externally derived ideologies and externally modeled political and economic institutions." In consequence, when it comes to implementing Afropessimists views, the relations between the West and the African nations are subjected to mutual manipulation, and often fall in the "quick fix trap"[43] where both the Western and the African "miss assessed the gravity of problems and their implications."[44] As for the Sahel region, the Western assistances are "often thwarted" more by the Sahel immediate crisis containment than a long term strategy."[45]

The Afro-optimistic school of thought argues for African ad hoc solutions for African problems. This school focuses on the African's deep understanding of the

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[41] The Economist, "The Hopeless Continent," 13 May 2000, accessed 8 May 2016, http://www.economist.com/printedition/2000-05-13.

[42] Hubert, Vedrine, *Rapport Pour Le President de La Republique Sur La France Et La Mondialisation* (Presidence de la Republique Francaise Septembre 2013), 22, accessed 8 May 2016, http://www.hubertvedrine.net/publication/rapport.pdf.

[43] Kitchen, 13.

[44] Magyar, 20.

[45] Ibid.

environment and key cultural variables, which enable inclusive problem solving

mechanism such "l *arbre a palabre*"(Palaver tree).[46] The palaver tree is the traditional

peace talk or post conflict reconciliation meetings in most of the Sub-Saharan African

countries. These mechanisms combined would enable the Africans of each specific

region to overcome the ongoing issues. Mr. Odinga former Prime Minister of Kenya

during a 2014 conference at Yale University, argued that despites its multiple challenges,

Africa is "rising."[47] For instance, life expectancy across Africa has increased by about 10

percent, simultaneously over the past 10 years, real income per person has increased by

more than 30 percent. According to the World Bank's 2014 Doing Business Report,

Africa's GDP is expected to rise by an average of six percent a year–partly due to foreign

direct investment. Mr Odinga mentioned that "FDI rose from $15 billion in 2002 to $46

billion in 2012."[48]

On the political spectrum many researchers support the fact, Sub-Saharan African

supranational institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) proved their ability to bring and their role in the African conflict

resolutions.[49]

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[46] The Palaver Tree is an excellent resource for post conflict reconciliation. Anna Floerke Scheid, "Under the Palaver Tree: Community Ethics for Truth-Telling and Reconciliation," Academia, accessed 8 May 2016. https://www.academia.edu/ 11837414/Under_the_Palaver_Tree_Community_Ethics_for_Truth-Telling_and_ Reconciliation?auto=download, 1-21.

[47] Raila Odinga, "Afro-Optimism: Has the Pendulum Swung Too Far?" (Lecture, (Video/text), Yale University, 13 October 2014), accessed 27 April 2016, http://www.africanglobe.net/business/afro-optimism-pendulum-swung/.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Onwudiwe and Ibelema, 34.

However, Afro-optimists trend to neglect the fact that these African institutions are subject to bias because they are financially dependent to western institutions. The IMF and UN cover the African Union (AU) functioning budget at 70 percent.[50] As for the Sahel countries themselves, their actions are limited due to budgetary constraints. Therefore, most of the time their political decisions and initiatives are not implemented.[51]

The Afro-constructivist school of thought

The Afro-constructivism constitutes a middle ground between the Afro-pessimism, which follows the realistic International Relations (IR) theories, and the Afro-optimistic, which tends to be rather close to liberalism. It focuses on the human dimension while dealing with the African Affairs. It distinguishes itself from the Afro-pessimism materialist approach, hence rather than focusing on how the distribution of material power, such as military forces and economic capabilities, the Afro-constructivism defines the balances of power between the major actors to explain the behaviors and trends. It also differs from the Afro-optimism in a sense that it has no misconception about the nature of the relations Sahel-Western countries, especially the U.S. and France. It argues for the readjustment of these relations in order to take into account the realities of the Sahel in a global system.[52]

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[50] Stephanie Hanson, "The African Union," Council on Foreign Relations, September 2009, accessed 19 May 2016, http://www.cfr.org/africa-sub-saharan/african-union/p11616.

[51] Odinga, 1.

[52] April A Gordon, and Donald L. Gordon, eds, *Understanding Contemporary Africa, Introductions to the States and Regions of the Contemporary World*, 5th ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), 199.

According to the Afro-constructivist school of thought , first there is a need to compromise between different actors (U.S. towards Africa, U.S. towards France's African policy, France towards U.S African policy, and Sahel states towards any major foreign policy), and their perspectives and endstates. Second, there is a need to empower eligible African countries to assume a regional role for security and stability such as South Africa for Africa Southern region, or Nigeria for West African region. Third, in regard of the complexity of the African security environments, it must be noted that there is no "quick fix trap." Therefore, diplomatic relations should be implemented to foster mutual understanding of endogenous and exogenous developing dynamics, and then one should resist the temptation of reading Africa only through East-West competition lens in order to avoid a distortion between the perspective and the African reality.[53]

In conclusion, Afro-constructivists note that the U.S. policy towards West Africa, especially the Sahel countries, is transitioning from more moral standpoint to more support in a long-term engagement. For instance, in June 2005 the U.S. started the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), a multi-faceted, multi-year U.S. Government (USG) program as an extension of the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), completed in early 2004, which focused on Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. This partnership aimed to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger, as well as Nigeria and Senegal), defeat terrorist organizations by strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities, enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces, promoting democratic governance, discrediting terrorist ideology, and reinforcing bilateral military ties with the

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[53] Kitchen, 31-44.

United States. Additionally, TSCTP would facilitate cooperation between the Sahel countries and Maghreb partners (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) in combating terrorism.[54]

However, America's African policies suffer from the fact that the U.S. most of the time concedes the lead to its European allies, which impede the U.S. and Sahel countries relations. The U.S. should "enhance the American democratization mission and concentrate it on countries that seem more amenable to western-style political liberalization" such as Nigeria, Mali, Ghana, Senegal and the Ivory Coast.[55] Therefore, there is a need to reevaluate U.S strategy towards the Sahel in order to gain in effectiveness.[56]

France should take a different approach that accounts more for the new political, economic and social dynamics in order to ensure lasting influences and improve its relations with the West African countries and particularly the Sahel ones in the long run.[57] As for the Sahel states, the Afro-constructivists school of thought argues that they should review their governing systems in order to adjust to the need of their populations. They should also be more self-resilient in order to redefine their relations with the western countries and develop.

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[54] AFRICOM, "Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership," accessed 19 May 2016, http://www.africom.mil/.

[55] Conteh-Morgan, 55.

[56] Akuetteh, 2.

[57] Vedrine, 1-63.

<u>Summary</u>

In the author's opinion, the Afro-constructivist school of thought, especially the 2012 US Strategy for Sub Saharan Africa, is right on target to the extent that there can be no strong democratic institution without the socio-political components (including security and judiciary aspects), economic, information (grounded on Human Development Index of a given country), and systemic components embedded in popular trust and supports. This strategy in addition of being comprehensive is also inclusive, that are in principle the ingredients to achieve the end state. However, the results are long coming.

In March 2012 the Government of Mali, one of the models cited for its democratic system, was wiped out by a military coup. The country almost turned into an Islamic state if not for French intervention to stop the jihadists' progression towards the capital city. A few weeks later on April 14th, it was the turn of Guinea Bissau to experience a military coup. The AU stepped in to save that fragile democracy. Blaise Compaore from Burkina Faso was thrown out of office by a popular insurgency in 2014. In 2016, in Niger, the reelection of President Yssoufou remains a contested presidential election and tensions within the country continue to grow. In this circumstance, if the Afro-constructivist approach is a good theory, in regards to the results their applications become questionable. This study will analyze the overall situation in the Sahel throughout the chapter 3 in order to identify the stakes, compare and contrast the achievements and the flaws (chapter 4), and make some recommendations (chapter 5).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."[58]

This quote is from the history of the Peloponnesian War concerning the invasion of the island of Melos by Athens in 416 BC. Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian and author wrote about the negotiations between the emissaries of the Athenian invaders and the rulers of Melos. As the Athenians left no choice to Melos but to surrender or be destroyed, they appealed to the Melians' sense of pragmatism. Whereas the Melians appealed to the Athenians' sense of decency and fear of the gods. Subsequently, neither side was able to convince the other. Negotiations failed, and the Athenians conquered Melos. Political scientists and diplomats refer to "the Melian dialogue" as a classic case study in political realism.

From colonization period to the recent years, the relationships between the African Sahel countries and the West, especially France and the US went through three phases. The first period starting from the colonization to the end of the Cold war rather looked like a remake of "The Melian dialogue," as the former colonial powers decided for their former colonies. However, at the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989, relations between the Sahel and the West evolved as some new challenges appeared on the international scene, and threats formerly restricted to locations within the Sahel region, were carried elsewhere by new vectors becoming transnational, then international, and finally major

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[58] Thucydides 84-116, 5.

concerns at Europe's southern gates by the early 2000s. The current evolution in the Sahel and Western countries relationships started for the US when President Obama got in office. He set the tone for a new Sahel and West rapport in the "US Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa."[59]

However, despite Western interventions since the beginning of the War on Terror, resources allocated to the Sahel security environment steadily degraded to a point that the Western interests and homelands are in jeopardy. Hence, the primary question of this thesis: "Is the current level of security cooperation between the Sahel countries and the West (the US and France) sufficient to enable stability; allow steady economic development, and further national interests between the Sahel countries and the West in a relative low cost-benefits ratio?"

To conduct this research the author will use the qualitative methodology focused on document analysis and data interpretations. The proposed method aims to provide an overall understanding of the Sahel security environment by identifying the dynamics and trends, the stakeholders as well as their interactions patterns. The next goal will be to evaluate the current security cooperation schemes (2004-2014) in order to discuss whether or not the current strategic postures are enough to contain the hybrid threats present in the Sahel. Whereas, the last endeavor will consist in looking for alternatives mechanisms to improve the security cooperation frameworks, effectiveness and efficiency. The following chart gives an overview of the research steps, as well as the tools used.

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[59] The White House, *U.S Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, DC: The White House, June 2012), 2.

Figure 2. Rechearch Methodology

Source: Created by author.

The chart above represents the overall research, the method, the steps followed as well as the tools used to evaluate and achieves the findings presented in chapter 4. The author used the Army Design Methodology (ADM) and PMESII frameworks to conduct the research and it was completed in the five steps as follow:

As in ADM, the first step aims to provide an overall understanding of the Sahel current security environment and its evolution throughout 2004- 2014. The author will

use the PMESII framework to first analyze the Sahel current environment, then compare and contrast the evolution of threats between 2004 and 2014, and the ongoing security cooperation schemes.

Whereas a second step aims to describe the Sahel desired environment from the US, France and Sahel countries perspectives. The goal is to compare the collective view of regional nations with the projections of Western countries namely America and France. This step will allow to present in a third step the common interests for cooperation on the one hand, as well as the gaps and conflicting interests on the other. To make an analogy with the ADM, step three will correspond to the problem framing.

The fourth step will then present elements of an integrated Sahel strategy, which will constitute the basis for a regional strategy. Whereas, a last step will look into the ends-ways means of this integrated Sahel strategy, and also assess the inherent risks, which may be generated from the gaps and conflicting interests (step 3). All findings will be presented in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the current strategic postures to determine whether or not they are adequate with the different actors' strategic endstates, and then explore the options in order to align the ends with the ways and means. Thus, this chapter will first present the Sahel current security environment using the Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information (PMESII) framework. At the end of this step, the reader should be able to identify the dynamics and trends, the stakeholders as well as their interactions patterns. Then, in a second part, this study will look into the desired environment the actors are projecting based on their strategic interests.

From the current and desired environment, the study will in a third part evaluate the common interests, which may constitute the basis for future regional cooperation. It will also identify the gaps between actor's perspectives, as well as their conflicting interests. Based upon these findings, the study should be able to identify and present in a four part critical elements of an integrated Sahel strategy. At last, this study will present an ends-ways-means analysis of an eventual integrated Sahel strategy, and assess the risks associated with it.

The Sahel Current Environment

In order to understand the Sahel region the author used the PMESII framework, and determined the following:

<center>Political</center>

On political aspect, the Sahel security environment is characterized by political instabilities with cross border implications, localized disputes within the populations and a large number of state, non-state and institutional actors with competing interests. These political instabilities are primarily due to political immaturity because the Sahel States gained their independence mostly in the 1960s. It started with the Republic of Niger on August 3, 1960, followed by Burkina Faso on August 5, 1960, then the Republic of Mali on September 22, 1960, and followed by Nigeria on October 1, 1960. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania closed the independence march on November 28, 1960. Although, their constitution called for democracy, mostly socialism or Marxism (1960s) the Sahel countries experienced their first truly democratic regimes during the 1990s. With only thirty years of existence, the democratic institutions in most Sahel states remain weak and the governing systems instable.[60] Therefore, democratic systems have not been in place long enough to allow either strong political systems, or strong and mature institutions.[61]

In addition, due to the low level of education, democratic rules (rights versus duties) are not fully integrated in popular subconscious. The uneducated majority of voters trend to shift from total passivity, with only limited interest to political matters, to destructive violence when manipulated by some vicious leaders. Sahel states struggle with finding the right balance between traditional management systems and the modern democratic rules. It therefore becomes very difficult for local governments to avoid

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[60] Kitchen, 31-44.

[61] Gordon and Gordon, 78.

political incoherence, unpopular decisions, while trying to meet the "good governance" requirements as instituted by the Western superpowers.[62]

For example, in Mali 1992 after the popular revolution got rid of the dictatorial regime of General Moussa Traore, the newly elected government of Alpha Oumar Konare tried hard to implement the budgetary reduction policy, as imposed by the IMF through the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). Basically, the then government of Mali had to substantially cut down its budget through a privatization program and reduction of government officials. Instead, they reduced military expenses and the functioning budget of the Ministry of Interior. Meanwhile, the decentralized bill passed, but the government could not provide basic needs for the northern regions of the country. These actions first lead to popular contestations in north and then the second Tuareg rebellion from 1994 to 1996.

Furthermore, the multiplication of local and international state actors and non-state actors with sometimes competing interests combined with the weaknesses of the political institutions and the lack of control structures amplifies the rampant corruption, which in return contributes to further weaken the Sahel countries. In such circumstances, one may be concerned with the unity of efforts for better control measures.

In such an overwhelming environment, local governments trend to assure their legitimacy and survivability through leveraging personal networks[63] (family, clan and ethnicity), and focusing their development efforts on dense voters areas.[64] So that, rural

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[62] Gordon and Gordon, 78.

[63] Conteh-Morgan, 42-55.

[64] Gordon and Gordon, 75-78.

and remote areas trend to be left aside. Which generates more frustrations and sometimes breaks out to localized conflicts, and pushes marginalized populations towards VEOs networks such as in the AQIM, Boko Haram or drug trafficking.

The following scheme is an example of the vicious circle within the Sahel states sometimes operate.

Figure 3.   Sahel political crisis cycle

Source: Created by author.

At the beginning, there is a situation, which poses a certain challenge to the government and the government will eventually respond to the situation. However, because of a shortage of means, the challenge is not solved, but rather contained. Meanwhile, there are vectors or catalysts such as corruption, which eventually amplifies the then challenge to a multilayer crisis. At this stage, the issue from the beginning has become a hybrid threat. The government unable to face it adequately transits into survival politics.

<center>Military</center>

As a whole, the security forces in the Sahel regardless the country have three major common dominators: they are poorly funded, their power projection capabilities are limited, and their force management systems lack integration.

Although, since 2004 the Sahel security forces have benefited a maintain a slightly raise of budget allocations in general, they remain poorly funded in comparison to the level of readiness their require to take on the threats within the area. The table below shows a constant augmentation of the military expense during the period 2004 - 2014. However, when translating these figures to percentage, it shows that the military expenses rose not in correlation with the threats but rather because the country's GDP augmented.

For example, from the decade 2004 to 2014, the Malian Tuareg rebellion resumed twice which required full spectrum military operations: 2006 to 2008 and 2011 to 2014, while COIN and drug operations were continuous. In the same period, the Malian military expenses augmented by 40 percent in in terms of cash (2006-2008). However, in term of budget allocation, they were constant: 1.5 percent of the GDP in average,

<center>44</center>

regardless the actual security situation of the country. In peace time, those allocated

budgets could not cover the manning, training, equipping and maintenance, not to

mention the war periods. Which significantly altered the Malian armed forces readiness

and limited their power projection capabilities.[65]

According to the statistic from *Global fire Power* the Sahel Military forces are

weak with exception of Nigeria. They lack of equipment and experience important

logistic and sustainment issues, which significantly limit their power projection and their

duration time in actual fight.[66] Whereas, Boko Haram forces are able to fight

simultaneously the Nigeria (4th military power in Africa) Chad (15th military power in

Africa), Cameroon (21st military power in Africa), and Niger armed forces, and even

managed to conserve some controlled territories within northern Nigeria and Cameroon.

The third and most detrimental fact within the Sahel security forces is the lack of

integration in their force management system. With the exception of Algeria, the Sahel

militaries and law enforcement are not fully integrated in a DOTMLPF (Doctrine,

Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities) force

management system as it exists in the US, France or Algeria, which creates a

discontinuity between the strategic and the tactical level.[67]

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[65] African Studies, "Sahel Military Assets" (African Studies Bulletin, 2012), accessed 8 June 2016, https://www.deepdyve.com/lp/wiley/sahel-military-assets-ngG6ZYyEZM.

[66] Global Fire Power, "Total Population by Country," 2015, accessed 8 June 2016, http://www.globalfirepower.com/total-population-by-country.asp.

[67] African Studies.

For instance, a part from Algeria and now Nigeria, the other countries within the region have not upgraded their doctrines since the late 1970s. However, the troops at tactical level use most of the modern western tactics. This lack of official modern documentations creates a certain dysfunction between the political strategic desired end state, the force management and the overall integration. This situation is all the more serious that it reflects on all aspect: on doctrinal level, it creates confusions and incoherence in training domains, which hinders the troop interoperability at national and regional level. Whereas, the threats in the area are transnational and international.

On Materiel aspects, the Sahel Militaries are under equipped because of the budgetary constraints that prevent regular material upgrade and maintenance. In fact, most of the Sahel countries experience serious economic and debt issues. They generally have to face several humanitarian and structural urgencies at once, which push Military affairs down on the countries' priority lists. In addition, till recently the financial institution granted the loans with some strings (conditions) attached to it that not takes into account the military expenses. At leadership level, the rampant corruption corroded the chain of command and control, especially in remote areas like in the Sahara desert where the state does not have always have check and balance system in place to keep officials corruption free. Hence, the international drug smugglers based on their nexus or family bonds easily bribe security forces to get their cargo through. In addition, in some Sahel countries like in Mauritania and North Mali the local leadership mostly recruit among its own kin or tribe, which in return clogs down the command and control system, as the troops tend to obey only leaders of their tribes. One of the major consequence is that some leaders become so powerful that they challenge the states. The vast majority of

the Malian rebel leaders used to serve in Malian armed forces and their kinsmen generally compose their troops.

In short, on the military perspectives the Sahel security forces despites the constant increase in their budgets are still weak and unable to decisively engage the transnational threats by their own. The supports of a major western military power are all the more necessary that will help in term of force management integration and regional integration.

<center>Economics</center>

As for the economics, the Sahel indicators are good and national GDPs growth rates are positive with an annual average of 19.5 percent, a progression of 195 percent in 10 years.[68] And yet, the region still has to face many challenges. The Sahel region is a paradox where some of the world fastest growing economies go together with some of the world poorest and less advanced countries such as Nigeria, Mali, Burkina and Mauritania.

This economic growth is based on exports and the communication technology and export.[69] According to Jide Wintoki "between 2000 and 2010, Sub-Saharan African trade with China grew at a rate 25 percent: twice the rate of the overall growth of Sub-Saharan African trade with the world."[70] In term of furnishing the basic needs such as continuous electricity, the Sahel governments are in general the least capable, and yet the region

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[68] World Bank, "World Development Indicator."

[69] Wintoki, 16.

[70] Ibid.

remains attractive for international investors. According to the World Bank, the Nigerian

foreign direct investment net inflows shift from 1,874,033,034 in 2004 to 4,655,849,169

in 2014, almost twice and half.
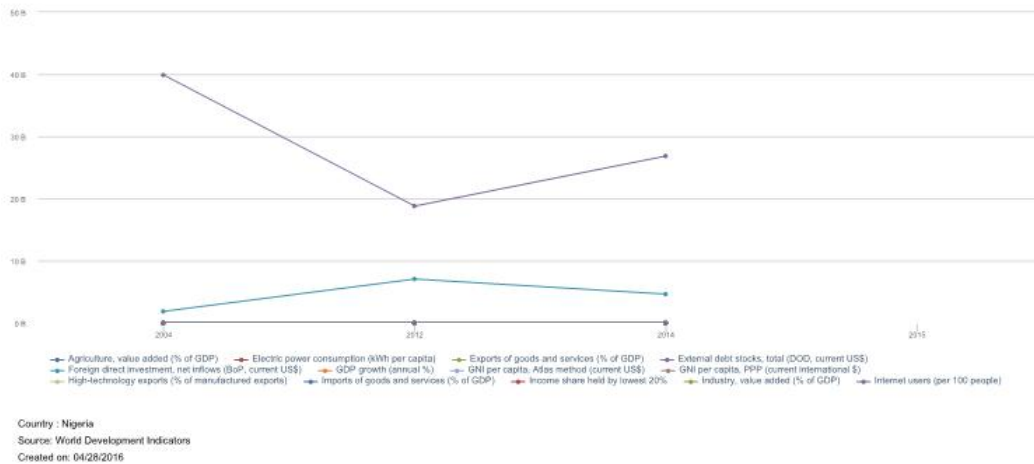
Figure 4.   Nigeria development indicator 2004- 2014

Source: World Bank, "World Development Indicator," accessed 27 April 2016,
http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-
indicators&Type=TABLE&preview=on#.

On the macroeconomics spectrum, an economic dependency, poor human

resources, and lack of infrastructure particularly in transportation and energy domains

characterize the Sahel region. Those together generate instability, inflations and may

cause a loss of competiveness over time. In that regards, when compared to the Walt W.

Rostow "five stages of economic growth"[71] model the Sahel region is at the "Traditional

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[71] Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith, *Economic Development*, Georges
Washington University 2015, 62. accessed 7 December 2015,
http://www.gbv.de/dms/zbw/782106943.pdf.

society," which is the first stage. According to Dr. David A Anderson, the first phase of

development is foundational and the most difficult to emerge from. Countries at this point

in development have annual per capita income of less than $2000, as well as many of the

following characteristics: high birth rates, low life expectancy, low literacy rates, more

tribal centric, debt burdened.[72]

Therefore, despites the GDP growths the region has a long way to go before

reaching the emergence stage. The Togolese economist and former prospective ministry

Kaku Nubukpo postulated, "in 2015 the African countries, which export cotton fiber, lost

40 percent of their revenue during the last three years" because of change rate movements

between Euro and US Dollars.[73] In addition, the monetary dependency of most of the

Sahel countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) to France combined with structural

issues such as transportation impedes the regional economic growth.[74] Thus, despites an

increase of Sahel exports towards China and Europe mostly, the Sahel economies remain

fragile and vulnerable to inflations.

Furthermore, on the economics perspective the Sahel region is also characterized

by a rampant instability sponsored by national, transnational and international vectors

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[72] David A. Anderson and Andrew Wallen, "Preparing for Economics in Stability Operations," *Military Review* (June 2008): 3, accessed 7 December 2015, https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-1503458191/preparing-for-economics-in-stability-operations.

[73] Kaku Nubukpo, "Economie le Franc CFA," Lecture, *Jeune Afrique Magazine*, 9 July 2015, accessed 28 April 2016, https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=kaku +nubukpo&&view=detail&mid=9014F9F687863F45CA829014F9F687863F45CA82&F ORM=VRDGAR.

[74] Nicolas Agbohou, *Le franc CFA et l'euro contre l'Afrique: pour une monnaie africaine et la coopération sud-sud* (Paris: Solidarité Mondiale, 2000), 1.

such as the corruption and weak judiciary system.[75] Competing actors bribe the local

officials and populations, who are poor and vulnerable to advance their interests. For

instance, in Mali the actual nexus of local rebel groups and AQIM is essentially due to

the fact that the rebel groups because of their knowledge of the areas escort the drug to

any Mediterranean Sea port and ensure logistical support to any group willing to pay

either international traffickers or Terrorists. They easily get through the security control

because of their bonds with corrupted security officials. In return, those VEOs offer high

paid job opportunities to the communities they operate within.[76] This situation is all the

more challenging to local governments than they are unable to oppose adequate solutions

to contain the phenomena.

<div align="center">Social</div>

On the social spectrum, the Sahel countries are affected by endogenous and

exogenous dynamics, which combine together, translate into four (4) major common

denominators to all Sahel countries: demographic explosion, urban migrations, important

ethnic and social disparities, more and more uses of violence as contestation method.

<div align="center">Demographic explosion</div>

From 2004 to 2014, the Sahel population grew by 30 percent,[77] to become one of

the world fastest growing population where about 47 percent of the population is 25 and

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[75] Ibid., 47.

[76] Wolfram Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel -Sahara Region* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2012), 1-35, accessed 28 April 2016, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sahel_sahara.pdf.

[77] World Bank, "World Development Indicator."

below.[78] Countries like Niger show a statistical average of 8 children per woman.[79] This accelerated growth aggravated some existing challenges such as anarchic urbanization, education and health, the rural exodus and migration, and poverty. This rapid population growth is tied to the predominance of polygamy and early marriage of women with no education on birth control methods. In fact, because of the predominance of Islam[80] the Sahel familial structure is generally polygamist, which allows a man to marry up to four women.

Urban migrations

The urban migrations are generally motivated by: the needs for job and better social status, the degradation of ecosystem and natural resources because of climate change. This rural exodus not only creates an even repartition of the populations with the appearance of slums within the cities, but also impacts local economies with a high risk of desperate unemployed young people to fall into organized crimes or embrace extreme ideologies.

A majority of migrants are uneducated and have hard time finding decent jobs in towns. As a result, the urban unemployed population grows, with ripple effects on organized crime network such as international drug trafficking, and extreme ideologies such as rebellion and terrorist movements. In addition, local institutions overwhelmed by

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] The Southern Algeria, Northern Nigeria (9 States) and Mauritania are Muslim, Mali and Niger are 90 percent Muslim, 5 percent Christian and other. Only Burkina Faso and South Nigeria are predominantly Christian however, they adhere to polygamist regime.

the situations because their existing structures are unable to absorb such human flows, sink into recurring crisis management, which let more room to the VEOs for recruiting and developing their activities. Notwithstanding, it will be imprudent to attribute the root causes of the development of crime nexus to the only unemployment aspects.

Ethnic and Social disparities

From 2004 to 2014 the region GDP evolved by 19.5 percent in average. Whereas during the same period the Human Development Index (HDI) oscillated at 0.5 percent.[81]

Furthermore, The Sahel countries are multiethnic. It exists within each Sahel countries an average of five ethnic groups spread between three distinctive categories: sedentary, semi-nomadic, and nomad. The multiple ethnicity implies some dynamic alliances and tensions between different ethnic groups. These tensions have some impacts on the nationals' cohesion as different ethnic groups approach and comprehend the national situation from different perspectives, which generate a permanent climate of suspicion between the ethnic majorities and minorities. For instance, there are tensions between the Ibos and Yoruba in Nigeria, Tuareg and the Mandinka in Mali, Arab and afro in Mauritania.

Populations in the Sahel region are divided into sedentary, semi-nomadic and nomadic. The sedentary and semi-nomadic dominate the political power. The nomads because of their particular way of life, transiting from one country to another while breeding their animals, have maintained their cross-boundaries bonds. They often have several citizenships within the region. The multiple citizenship allows the nomads to

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[81] World Bank, "World Development Indicator."

travel and pass the national border controls easily. It also allows them to profit through any advantages that exist in any of the countries where they retain citizenship.

For example, it is common to find a Malian Tuareg from Inhalid or Tinzaouaten who has an Algerian passport with part of his family living in Burkina Faso or Niger. He may use his Malian passport to travel in Europe or in other Maghreb countries, whereas his Algerian citizenship gives him access to decent health care system. He would rather use his Niger paperwork to access the UN humanitarian relief donations and assistance more important in Niger than Mali and Burkina Faso. However, Burkina Faso is the country of choice if he has to sometimes flee from authorities because there is no extradition from Burkina Faso to another country within the region. In addition, the nomads and their livestock's transhumances has been an issue since the decolonization era when former colonial powers traced the boundaries of the actual countries regardless the local human and social realities. So that, the nomads found their families spread cross boundaries. As they continue to transit from one country to another in regards with seasons, it generates errors in countries population census.

Use of violent methods

As the nomads continued their transhumances with families and belongings, the established sedentary populations were the ones to be educated to modern schools. They legitimately hold the power after the departure of the colons, which generated a social disparity within the newly independent states and aggravated the existing social tensions between sedentary black African descendants and nomads mostly Tuareg, Arabs and Berber descendants. Those tensions are tied to racial and power factors.

The former relied on the natural beliefs of intellectual superiority within the nomad communities. Since in medieval period during the Great West African Empires eras, the nomads, thanks to their travels, were the first to bring new discoveries and knowledge to the sedentary Sudanese and they were respected accordingly. The latter is due to the reputation the nomad warriors especially Tuareg gained through time: first during the empires era and second during colonization.

Furthermore, during colonization, the nomads refused the colonial school and sent their slaves instead. Whereas, the sedentary continue to learn through colonial school and got better prepared for the modern world. With the modernization and its challenges the nomads soon found themselves left behind with no access to proper medication , no access to school, and few qualified enough to participate into governmental structure (the countries do not have enough means to project power and structure to accommodate nomads way of life). Soon they became second class citizens. However, because of the way of life they developed a certain expertise in navigating through the Sahara desert. As the Sahel region became a hub for international smuggling and crime networks, the nomads put their expertise to use. They first started escorting the illicit goods from one end to the Mediterranean cost. Then now integrate the criminal networks, which in return, provided them with money, gave them access to sophisticated arms, and leveraged their will to challenge local governments using violent methods.

<div align="center">Infrastructure</div>

As for infrastructure, the Sahel countries in general are weak. This situation aggravated the gaps between big cities and rural areas. Mauritania, one of the world's top

exporter of iron, has only 728 km of railroad.[82] The lack of infrastructure is due to its economic situation, its burden of debt which hinders the Sahel countries investments, and the SAP imposed by the IMF and World Bank.[83] In fact, soon after the independences the Sahel region went through the nationalization phases of the 1960s to 1970s, which led to the economic crises and the indebtedness of the 1980s when the economic reforms failed. That in return triggered the wave of military coups during the late 1960s in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Then, during the 1980s under pressure from the IMF and in the attempt to stabilize the economies and moneys, the Sahel countries abandoned national-socialism to adhere in mass to the liberal and open market systems. However, because of their level of readiness to cope with the ruthless completion of the liberal market system, the weakness of local structures, the absence of strong rule of law and judiciary systems, and the corruption broke out in unprecedented manner. Which would crash the economic, social system; hinder the democratic process, and eventually led to more pauperization of local populations, and more crises in the 1990s. Nowadays, the Sahel is experiencing a new phase based on the search of balance between state owned and liberal market system.[84]

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[82] Central Intelligence Agency, "The world fact book Mauritania," accessed 7 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mr.html.

[83] Conteh-Morgan, 53.

[84] Agbohou, 1.

According to professor, Emmanuel Pondi information in the Sahel is characterized by the weakness of information structures and the dependency on foreign assets, which creates an asymmetry, based on the marginalization and misrepresentation of the region. Except Algeria and recently Nigeria, the Sahel countries do not own satellites. Instead, they are heavily dependent on Western-owned satellites for broadcasting, and western media such as France 24, BBC for information, which generates a certain misrepresentation of the Sahel issues. Because of these structural weaknesses, information is not an available asset to the Sahel countries while using their national power instruments (DIME).

In addition, Sahel information is also characterized by a technologic paradox, which juxtaposes weak infrastructures with the widespread of communication technologies based on the mobile phone and internet. This creates a phenomenon wherein governments experience more difficulty broadcasting information than the population experiences pulling information from the internet.

The PMESII framework reveals the paradox of the Sahel region. On the one hand, the crisis are cyclic due to the political tensions, weak governance systems, major economic and structural challenges which compounded with the social dynamics either maintained latent tensions or triggered cyclic crisis. Whereas on the other hand, the region has an interesting development perspectives with a lot of potential, which if put into work will benefit the Sahel nations and their Western counterparts (USA and France).
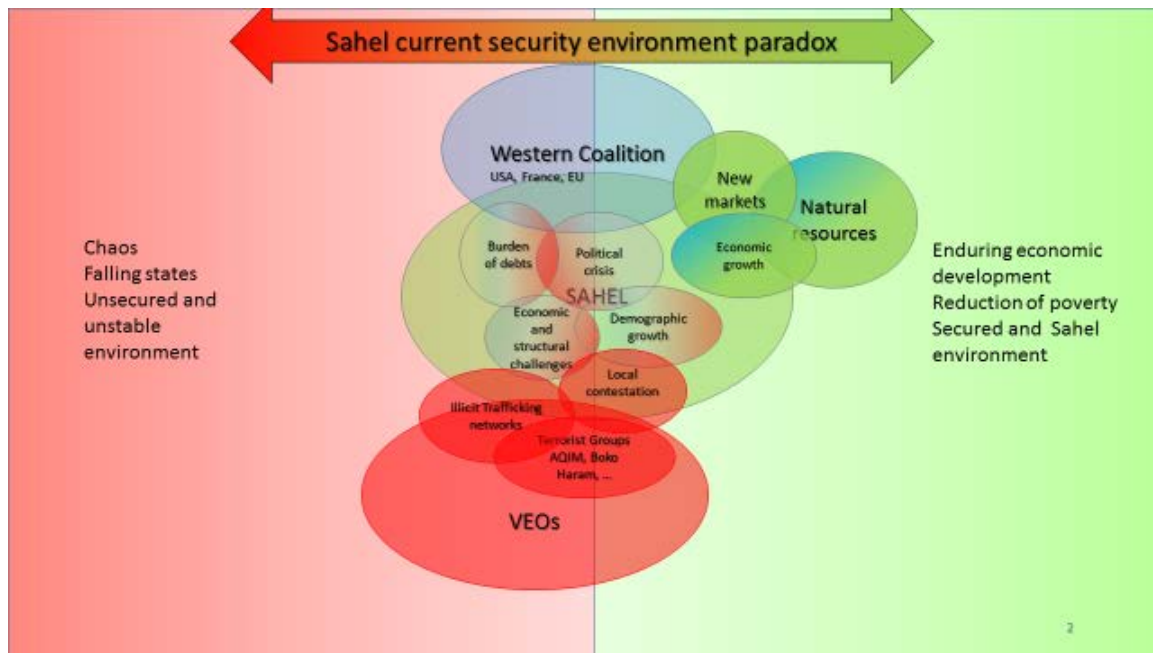
Figure 5.   Sahel current security environment

Source: Created by author.

The figure above depicts the Sahel current security environment. On the left hand side, the color red represents the stage of chaos, failed states, unstable environment where the Sahel nations may fall into if they fail to counter the ongoing illicit activities and the development of VEOs. The right hand side on the contrary represents the stage of enduring development with impact on politics, economics and social aspects.

As shown on the figure the Sahel states in green color are on the edge, some internal factors such as recurrent political and economic crisis, or weak infrastructure, corruption and illicit trafficking trend to drag them into chaos. Whereas, the economic potential within the region compound with supports of the Western nations (in Blue) help the Sahel nation building their countries for more secured and stable environment.

What is the current cooperation scheme in the Sahel?

The international community does understand the transnational and unpredictable nature of the threats to the Sahel regional security and stability, and is willing to assist with dedicated strategies: "Sahel strategy." These multilateral and multidimensional strategies aim not only to solve political and security crises, but also to deal with the root causes of instabilities. The UN, EU, AU and ECOWAS have adopted diverse strategies, which cover governance, education, security domains, development and resilience. However, the actual results do not meet their or Sahel nation's expectations, which beg the question: do all the actors genuinely adhere to these strategies? There is today in the Sahel a real issue with the multiplication of actors with no real coordination between them. Which elevates the risk of duplication and waste of resources.

That is why the UN created in July 2013 the United Nation Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), which will act as a multidimensional, multifactor, integrated platform in solving the issues in the Sahel. The UNISS is built around three pillars: "Strengthen institutions to foster democratic practices, support local governance and the extension of government services throughout national territories, and strengthen national and regional human rights mechanisms to combat impunity and assist the Sahelian countries to strengthen independent national justice systems to effectively address corruption." However, if the inclusive formula seems the best in this context, the effectiveness remains questionable because there is no clear single leadership to conduct this strategy.

The Sahel Desired Environment

The U.S. strategic end state for Sahel

In the actual interconnected world, the argument about whether or not Sahel issues constitute a direct threat to the U.S. homeland and national interest in the region is questionable. With the exception of Nigeria, the U.S. does not have any substantial strategic interest to protect in the Sahel, as France must with the Niger's uranium, iron in Mauritania, gold and ores in Mali. However, the recent terrorist attacks reveal that Europe is within the VEOs operational reach and vulnerable to their threats. Hence, the U.S. has no choice but to closely monitor the evolution of these security threats in the Sahel. This is necessary because there is no guarantee that the VEOs won't attack the US after Europe. Second, hitting America's NATO partners such as France will likely affect the U.S. strategic interests in Europe.

The 2009 speech of President Obama in front the Ghanaian parliament and the subsequent "U.S. strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa" published in 2012 laid out the pillars of the U.S. strategic focus in Sub-Saharan Africa.[85] On the political perspective, the U.S. ideal Sahel would be strong and stable African democracies where rule-of-law prevails, while the U.S. interests are preserved within the region.[86]

On the military perspective, the U.S. envisions a secured and stable Sahel where hybrid and transnational threats are contained, and VEOs such as Al Qaida or Boko Haram and their allied terrorists are defeated.[87]

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[85] The White House, 2.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

The U.S. desired Sahel economic environment would allow access to new markets and opportunities to U.S. direct investors, which will grow the U.S. commercial footprint within the region.

On the social spectrum, the U.S. envisions an improvement on several domains such as the education, health, opportunities for women and youth, while the poverty and hunger declines.[88]

As for infrastructure, the U.S. ideal Sahel region will have better infrastructures to support the investments and regional development to bolster the competiveness of the region on the global market.[89]

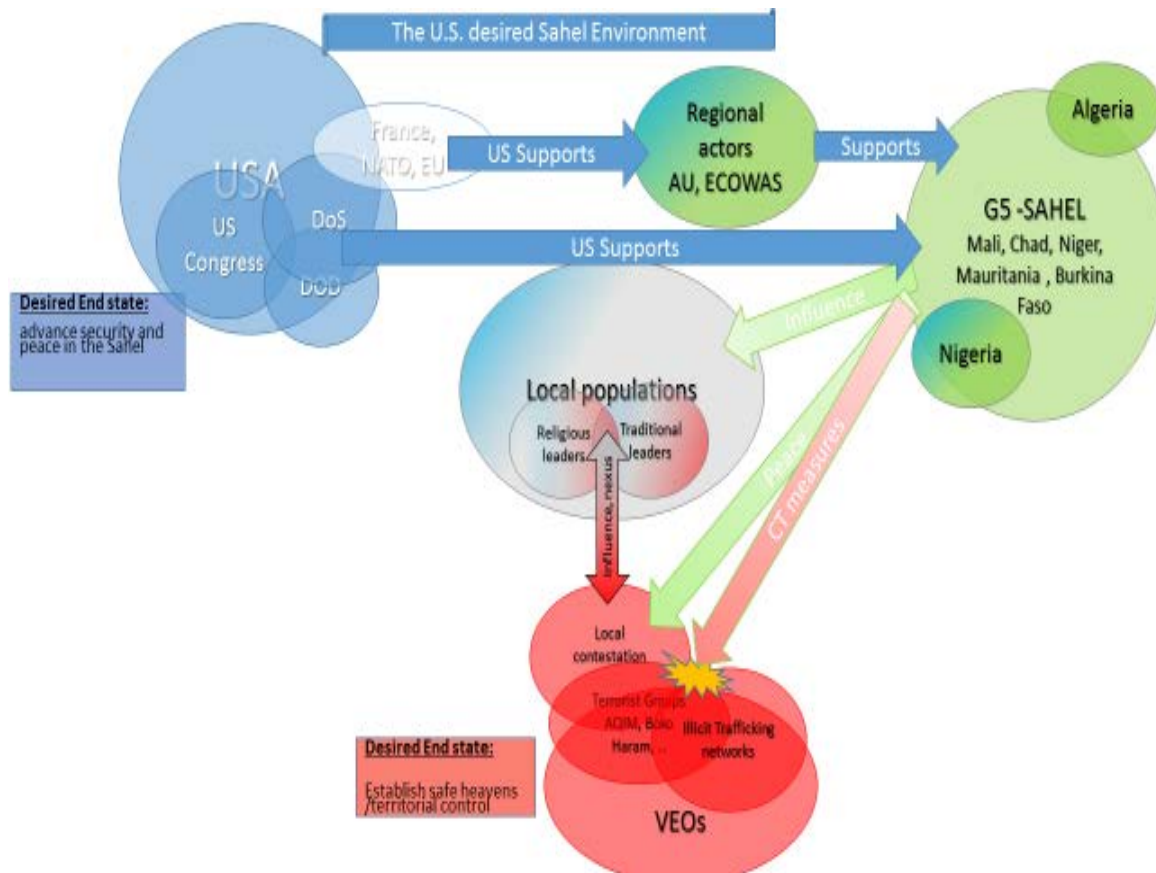[88] The White House, 4.

[89] Ibid., 6.

Figure 6.   The U.S. desired Sahel environment

Source: Created by author.

The figure above depicts the U.S. desired Sahel environment in regards to the

current Sahel security environment. The U.S. desired environment closely aligns with the

Afro-optimistic school of thought in theory, whereas in practice it rather swings pending

the situation between the Afro-pessimism and in some cases the Afro-constructivism. In

fact, the U.S. on the one hand often aligns itself with the French regional policies or

provides supports to French military interventions when requested (Operation SERVAL

in Mali). On the other hand, the U.S., despite the statement within "the U.S. strategy

towards Africa" document, trends to put significant restrictions and constraints on Sahel

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nations when they deal with their own matters independently while still benefiting from

U.S assistance. In this scheme, although the U.S. is the first actor its supports (blue

arrows) to Sahel countries are aligned with the U.S. NATO (white color) strategic

partners' ones, especially France, which is the major power broker, the most influential

western country within the region and the one which has the most national interests tied

to the Sahel. Second, the U.S. support to Sahel nations goes through the regional

institutions such as the G5- Sahel, ECOWAS or the AU, which in return, act in concert

with the different countries through regional programs. Last, the U.S. also has bilateral

agreements and cooperation, which allow the U.S. agencies such the USAID, and the

DOD to directly assist individual Sahel countries on specific matters. As shown above the

U.S assistance is support focus with no direct interventions on the ground. This U.S

scheme means to first mitigate the shortages the Sahel countries may encounter, second

pushes the Sahel countries to be more accountable for their actions and decisions. Last,

this scheme should cause VEOs culmination as the more Sahel countries augment their

capabilities the more pressure they can put on the VEOs across the region. Which should

prevent the VEOs switching between countries and establishing safe heaven.

The Sahel countries receiving U.S. assistance are first required to work with their

local populations in order to contain the spread of extreme ideology (green arrow

influence), initiate and implement policies to enable peace (green peace arrow)with local

contestations or rebellions such as in Mauritania(2007), Niger(2003-2006, 2006-2009),

Mali(on going), and Nigeria(on going). Second, the supports to Sahel nations aim to

leverage their military capabilities so that they individually and as a region (green circle)

fight the illicit activities (yellow clash) and oppose to defeat the VEOs (yellow clash).

However, potential friction points exist in the U.S. approach. Even though the U.S. strategy is suitable its feasibility remains questionable as this strategy is heavily dependent on the NATO partners, which do not genuinely adhere to the U.S. approach. In addition, the cooperation between Sahel nations is hindered by individual tensions as Sahel nations have different approaches and sometimes former grievances against each other.

<center>France strategic end state for Sahel</center>

Unlike its U.S. ally, which foresees the advance of democracy, rule of law and security, through "mutual responsibility and mutual respect"[90] at least in theory, the French white paper focuses more on French, Europe and NATO members' interests preservations, through a global approach based on risks identification and response through early anticipation-protection-prevention-dissuasion and intervention concept.[91]

On the political spectrum, France would like to preserve its privilege and influence over the regional in order to be able to anticipate, deter any potential threats to French interests and security, protect its national interests, prevent and intervene if necessary.[92]

On the military perspective, France is confronted with the dilemma of reducing the number of its projected personnel while maintaining a certain level of intervention capabilities in Africa. Hence, the French military bases in Africa are maintained, whereas

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[90] The White House, 1.

[91] Republique Francaise, *Le Livre Blanc Securite ET Defense National 2013* (Paris: Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2013), 1-160.

[92] Ibid., 79.

<center>63</center>

the number of troops has been diminished and redeployed according to the new priorities in the region. Thus, one of the biggest French contingents would like to diminish the number of its military personnel within the region but keep the military bases, which are strategic and critical for French regional interest protections.[93]

On the economics perspective, the French ideal Sahel environment would allow more development of French commercial partnership, access to strategic minerals, which are critical for France economy and industry.

As for social, France would like a peaceful Sahel region, while bolstering the *Francophonie* community.
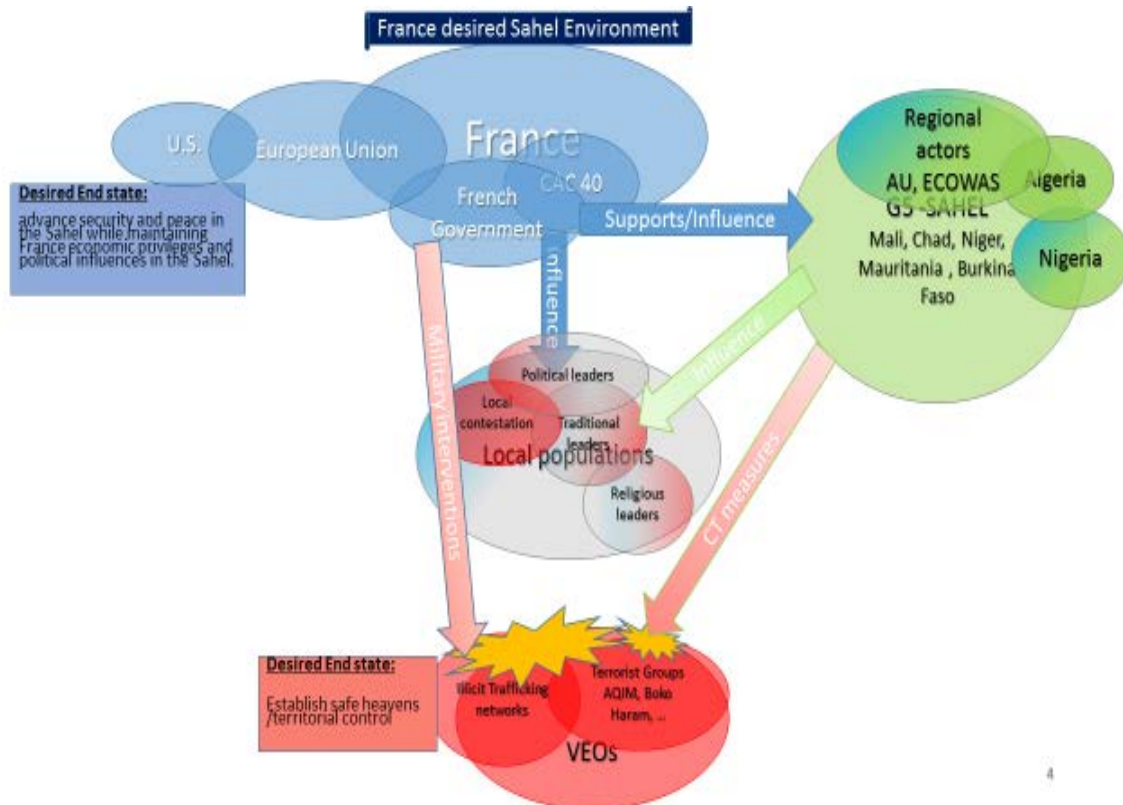
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[93] Republique Francaise, 82.

Figure 7.   France desired Sahel environment

Source: Created by author.

The figure above depicts France desired Sahel environment in regards to the

current Sahel security environment. It is based on an Afro-pessimistic school of thought

and argues for French regional hegemony through French political influences and direct

military actions. In this scheme, the team of French Government and a pool of French

economy majors (the CAC40) are in lead. They closely work together to advance French

national interests. Thanks to their connections which have root in colonization, early

Independences Day and through the *francophonie* networks, they gain a certain political

leverage (supports and influence blue arrow) within the regional institutions (France is

one of the main subventions provider to AU, ECOWAS and the individual Sahel

countries). The French Government sometimes benefits through direct contact with local protestors or rebellion. In case of Mali, the MNLA had its main political headquarter in Paris.

Beyond the political sphere, France actually conducts military operations within the Sahel (SERVAL 2013-2015, BARKHANE 2015) that are represented by the red arrow on the left hand side. However, as shown on the figure the French operations regardless their nature are supported (budget) by either the EU or the U.S., or both. For example, the EU supports a part of the French development agency's subvention to the Sahel nations. During Operation SERVAL in Mali, the U.S. assisted France with air refueling and strategic lift capabilities.[94] Notwithstanding, France's endstate and agendas (ways) somehow contradict with the U.S. ones, which ultimately aim to empower Sahel partners. Indeed although the U.S practices are aligned with the Afro pessimism, it pledges the African leadership in the long run, so much, so it ultimately competes with the French vision. As the U.S sees its current compromises as pragmatic and necessary to achieve African maturity and leadership. Whereas, the French actual foreign policy still works towards France leadership and regional hegemony.

The French desired Sahel environment as such is neither suitable nor acceptable for the Sahel nations because of their desire to shape French political influence in the region. In fact, the French strategy and subsequent approach as such would be feasible at

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[94] Colonel Robert Pope, USAF, Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Fair, USA, and Major Dale Fenton, USMC, "Using Strategic Foresight and Systems Thinking Analyses to Craft a U.S. Strategy for the African Sahel and Maghreb," *Campaigning: The Journal of the Joint Forces Staff College* (Fall 2015): 50-66.

great cost with a high potential of causing some frictions between France others Western countries, and alienating the local population from France.

<center>The collective view of regional nations desired environment</center>

The Sahel nations aspire more than ever to assume their "full independence"[95] and go their own ways whether it deals with political or economic models. The arguments are rooted in the Afro-optimism. They somehow oppose to the French Afro-pessimism, and are suspicious about the U.S arguments in favor of Afro-optimism. Their main goal is to change the existing partnership agreements, and change the relationships between Sahel/West in order to obtain more leverage in the international institutions such as the UN the IMF or the G20 summit. However, because of the challenges the Sahel nations are facing, they request assistance that is more Western in order to grant their survival. This situation generates a paradox and an incoherence in the Sahel countries foreign policies.

For instance, the Sahel political leaders often denounce the French foreign policy within the region, whereas they request Paris supports to advance their view on the international scheme, or would request more resources from the IMF with no string attached.

On the economic perspective, the Sahel nations with Nigeria in the lead are developing the regional trade and networks in order to foster the ad hoc initiatives,

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[95] Full independence is a term often use by African leaders to complain about the Western imposed rules over their nations.

develop local technology and industry that will add more value to the exported goods.[96]

However, this Sahel vision collides with the conditions of credit allowance of the IMF or

the World Bank. The Sahel states being heavily indebted most of them are under SAPs,

and do not control their own money: Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso use the CFA

which is produced in France, controlled and indexed with the Euro.

On the social spectrum the Sahel populations galvanized by Pan Africanist and

Afro-optimistic think tanks, pledge the return of the traditional society social codes such

as the "*arbre a palabre*" conflict resolution mechanism.[97] The Sahel youth are prone to

entrepreneurial based on cheap technologies, local row material and local opportunities.

In addition, the existing cultural diversity stimulates the export of Sahel cultures towards

the West.[98]

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[96] Groupe de la Banque Africaine Développent, "Mission Et Stratégie," 8 May 2016, accessed 8 May 2016, http://www.afdb.org/fr/about-us/mission-strategy/.

[97] Under the Palaver Tree: is an excellent resource for post conflict reconciliation. Anna Floerke Scheid, "Under The Palaver Tree: Community Ethics for Truth-Telling and Reconciliation," Academia 1-21, accessed 8 May 2016, https://www.academia.edu/11837414/Under_the_Palaver_Tree_Community_Ethics_for_Truth-Telling_and_Reconciliation?auto=download.

[98] John Green, "Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa" (Lecture, (video) World History, Khan Academy), accessed 8 May 2016, https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/crashcourse-worldhistory/whats-god-got-to-do-with-it-2/v/crash-course-world-history-16.
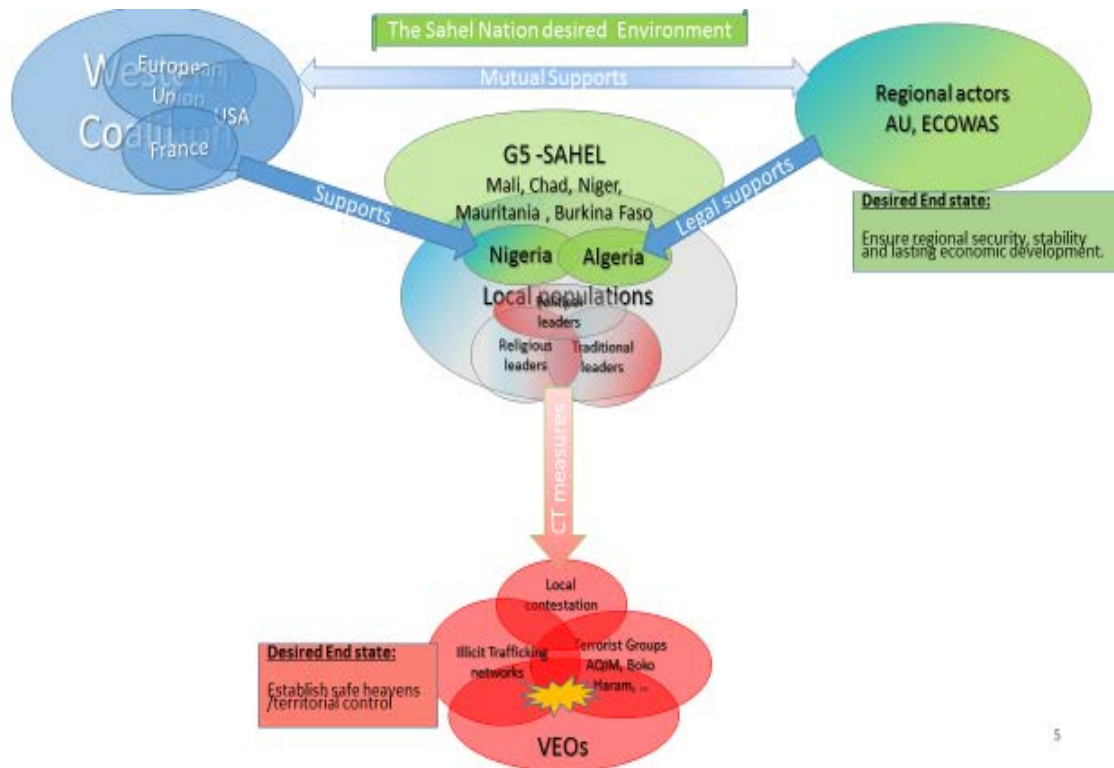
Figure 8.   The Sahel Nations desired environment

Source: Created by author.

The figure above depicts the Sahel nations' desired environment. It is based on
the Afro-optimism, which prone African lead and "African solutions to African
problems."[99]

Although, political tensions and frictions exist between Sahel political leaders,
and despite their different approaches the ultimate goal for Sahel nations is to take the
lead for Sahel matters and having the Western countries and institutions in supporting
role. The Sahel strategy is based on an idealistic approach as the western countries as a
whole (blue circle) along with the African regional institutions such as the AU,

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[99] Arguments generally advances by the Afro-optimistic.

ECOWAS or will provide supports or assistance at the request of the Sahel nations themselves according to their own agendas. The western coalition (blue circle) would have a single consensual endstate and would provide support accordingly. Whereas, the regional institutions because of their lack of means would serve as international legal authorities in accordance with the western coalition. The Sahel nations with Nigeria and Algeria (the most powerful military countries) in lead would act against "the secessionist endeavors within the region"[100] as well as the illicit trafficking, terrorists networks.

<u>Common interests and area for cooperation</u>

Sahel and Western nations, namely the U.S. and France, share several common interests and hold several converging points in their strategic visions. for instance:

On the political and security spectrum, both Sahel and Western nations are working to advance lasting democracy models, strong institutions and peace within the region, contain immediate transnational threats, and then defeat the VEOs. This situation looks like a win-win. It will eventually translate into a reinforcing of existing institutions in the Sahel with more inclusion of Sahel aspirations at international level such as the UN on the one hand. Meanwhile on the other hand, it will require more transparency from Sahel states in order to reduce the intern conflicts, reassure foreign investors and grant Western strategic interests with the region. The main goal will be promote security and

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[100] This term often used by Sahel political leaders refers to local contestations movements, rebellion movements and insurgencies, as those movements often mingle with the illicit trafficking networks and terrorist groups that supply them with the logistical supports necessary for their movements and military operations against the governments.

political stability, which in return will favor more exchange between the Sahel and the West.

On the economic perspective, the Sahel nations will likely benefit from more U.S. and French direct investments. Which would help them grow their GDP per capita, reduce poverty and develop their infrastructures in the condition that the agreements are fair and the rule of law prevails, so that the Sahel countries can genuinely benefit and the investors could mitigate their risks while having some returns. For instance, any commercial agreements should grant Western industries access to raw materials and new markets; which will stimulate their slowing economies, especially France.

At last, as more exchanges take place between the Sahel and Western populations, the better will be their mutual understanding, and the less friction will likely happen. Which is a good way to isolate the VEOs from the populations.[101]

Therefore, in such a complex security environment, it is beneficial for all actors to join in consensus such as the one prone by the Afro-constructivism school of thoughts. So that, the US will have strong partners like France and regional coalition (Nigeria, Mali, and G5 Sahel states) capable of tackling transnational challenges and hybrid threats in order to advance the U.S. interests with no major U.S footprints (principle of burden sharing). Whereas, France will remain one of the major stakeholders, content in a supporting role that does not advance its hegemony but also embroils it in fewer conflicts. As for the Sahel nations, their security will be granted, while they will give assurance of advancing rule of law and democratic system for better transparency and stability. In this regard, the idea of committing U.S. and French assets and resources to

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[101] Vedrine.

grow the capabilities of African countries to respond to regional security challenges makes sense.

In fact, on behalf of the principles of shaping and deterrence, the U.S. no longer require a big footprint in time of budgetary sequestration, while leveraging France assets already deployed within the region. Next, the U.S. assets and leadership combined with France regional influences and military will leverage Malian and Nigeria capacities to effectively deal with the immediate transnational threats while ensuring their future power building through cooperation. Which gives some security guarantee in reasonable coast ratio (principles of burden sharing and efficiency). Finally, it supports a reduction in the hybrid threats and keeps them away from jeopardizing common interests (Sahel and West).

<u>Gaps/conflicting interests</u>

In principle the Sahel nations, the U.S. and France desired Sahel environment are close in their intent, however some specific interests collide with the Sahel ones and their executions are often dichotomist. For example, both the Sahel nations and Western ones converge on the necessity to promote democratic regimes, however their respective conception and approach are somehow different and conflicting. The U.S. model of democracy is based on the system and the institutions, whereas the Malian one is built around the president, who is chief of the military, supreme chief of the high court of justice and does appoint the chairman of congress. This accumulation of power in one

person creates an asymmetry in the governance system, as the president's power is almost limitless.[102]

On the economic perspective, although the Sahel and the Western countries adhere to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) their exchanges are asymmetric. Sahel economies, because of the burden of their debts, weakness of their infrastructures and their dependency on export make them more vulnerable to the international market price fluctuations. In addition, the SAPs imposed by the World Bank and the IMF push more and more Sahel countries towards more cooperation with China. The Chinese trade with Nigeria moved from $2 billion in 2002 to $13 billion in 2012.[103]

Furthermore, the illegal migration and the organized crime constitute the other sticking issue between the Sahel and the West. In fact, Sahel nations such as Mali perceives their diaspora as a critical economic opportunity for the nation. For instance, in 2007 the Malian diaspora in France transferred back in Mali one hundred eighty three million Euro (183 million Euro), three times the funds the country received from France's development assistance program.[104] Whereas in the contrary for Europe and particularly France the illegal migration poses several issues such as health (epidemics such as Ebola

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[102] Republique du Mali, *La Constitution Du Mali* (Bamako: Assemble Nationale du Mali, 31 March 1992): 1-21, accessed 8 May 2016, http://unpan1.un.org/ intradoc/groups/public/documents/CAFRAD/UNPAN002746.pdf.

[103] Niyi Aderibigbe, "Chinese Companies Invested $1.79bn in Nigeria Last Year Envoy," Ventures, March 2014, accessed 9 May 2016, http://venturesafrica.com/chinese-companies-invested-1-79bn-in-nigeria-last-year-envoy/.

[104] L'aube, "Diaspora Malienne En France: Ces Milliards Envoyés Au Pays," Maliweb, 4 October 2007, accessed 9 May 2016, http://www.maliweb.net/ category.php?NID=22687.

or HIV), security (human trafficking, terrorism, and arms trafficking), or economic issues (drug and money laundering).

Elements of an integrated Sahel strategy

The existing security threats such as terrorism mingled with drug and international illicit trafficking, the economic challenges that generate social tensions, and promote extreme ideologies, jeopardize the Sahel stability. Meanwhile, it is clear that neither the regional countries nor the Western ones alone could solve these Sahel issues. And, despites the existing gaps between the regional and international actors, namely the Sahel nations, the U.S and France, there is still room for close security cooperation.

On a strategic level, a global endstate based on the Afro-constructivism arguments would set up genuine bases for stabilizing the Sahel by mitigating escalation of social violence, breaking the political crisis cycles, and above all defeating the VEOs, and their correlated vectors that pose unprecedented security challenges to both the Sahel and Western states. Beyond, the fact that this future partnership should be inclusive in a way to take into account the local, international, state and none-state actors requirements, it should be based on stakeholders' compromises and leverage their different assets.

For instance, on the political spectrum this strategic vision could be translated in form of political coalition in which the Sahel nations, namely Nigeria and Mali should take the lead, and the Western countries such as the U.S and France would be in support role. ideally the expectation from such a political coalition are: issuing adaptive decisions which adjust the Sahel specific needs and fulfill the local populations hopes, local stakeholders needs as well as preserve the western societies strategic interests within the region. For example one of the political challenges in the Sahel is the gap and lack of

trust between the local political leaders mostly accused to be western puppets and their populations, who remain suspicious against the West. Hence, decisions issued from such a Sahel-Western coalition should rapidly gain local populace supports. Whereas, the western nations in support will serve as role models in order to prevent the public to political leader divide, and act through international and regional institutions such as the UN, the AU, the G5 SAHEL or the IFM and others. Such a combination will not only help the Sahel Nations to grow in political maturity but it also permits the regional politics to take charge of their own future.

On the military spectrum, the future partnership would focus more on a regional approach such as the G5 Sahel in order to mitigate the impacts of transnational threats by reducing the disparities between the Sahel forces, and preventing the threats flowing across borders between Sahel states. For example, helping the Malian, Mauritanian, and Niger armed Forces building up will drastically reduce the power projection capabilities gap between Algerian forces and the rest, and ultimately help keeping constant pressure on the VEOs acting within this part of the Sahel. Having a country like the U.S in support would also help building cohesive forces within each country based on the U.S. force management and force integration models (DOTMLPF).[105] Which in return, would benefit in a long run both the Sahel and the West in achieving their common strategic endsate.

On the economic perspectives, the future Sahel integrated strategy would have to focus on the ways to reduce the burden of Sahel nations' debts, review the SAPs, and the

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[105] Simon Powelson, "Enduring Engagement Yes, Episodic Engagement No" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2012), 1-92.

development of correlated sectors such as the education. This will help the Sahel nations move from the first phase of economic development to the next one.[106] In return, future Sahel economic strategy should also grant some commercial privileges to France and the U.S. in comparison to China or other economic partners in order to encourage their supports and increased their participation in Sahel affairs. It should be a win-win principle in which the more stable and develop the Sahel become the more access the Western states would have to the Sahel strategic assets, therefore the more economic exchanges would take place between Sahel and the West for the sake of both regions. Such principles can be replicate to all domains.

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[106] Michael E. Porter, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (New York: Free Press, 1990), CH 10.
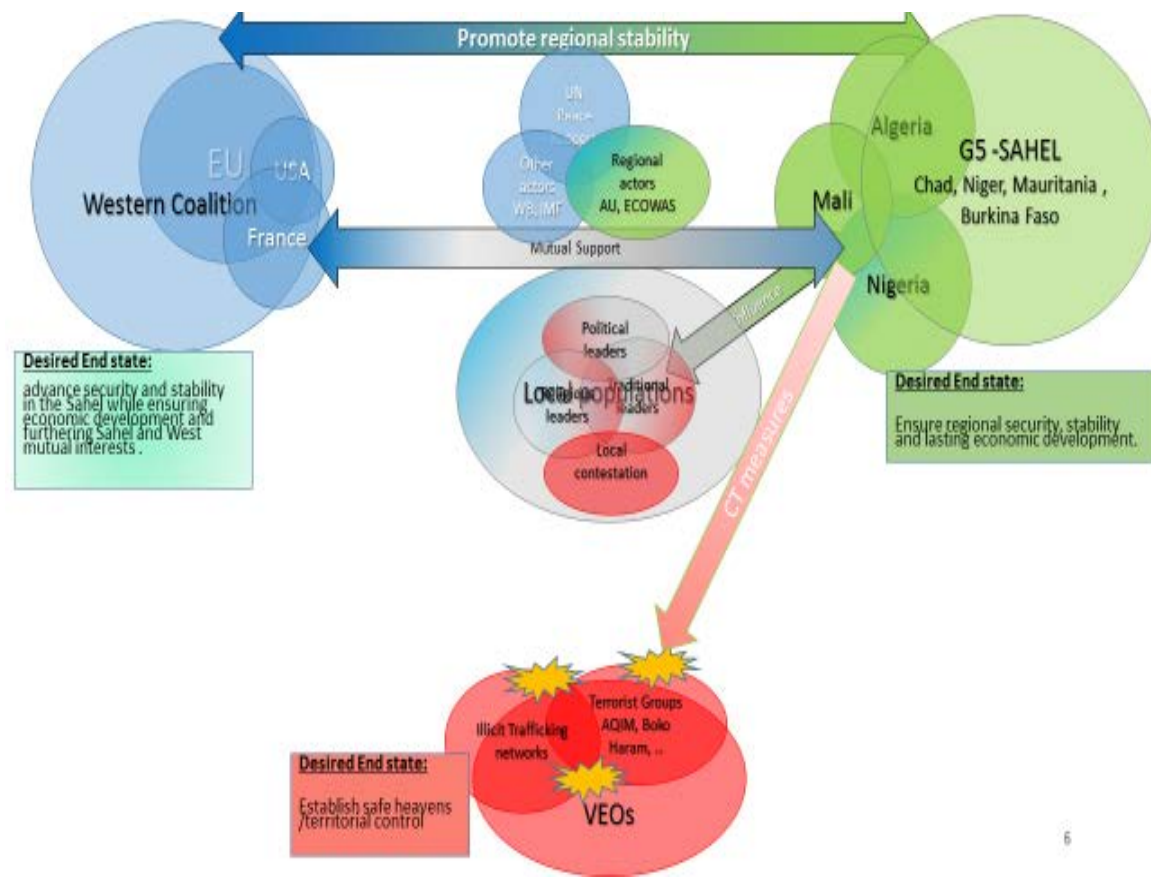
Figure 9.   Elements of an integrated Sahel strategy

Source: Created by author.

The figure above show the converging points between Sahel and Western nations on which an integrated strategy for Sahel can be built on. It goes along line the Afro-constructivist school of thought. First, it must be noted that both Western and Sahel strategies aim to secure, stabilize and promote economic development within the region, which should allow them to establish partnership based on mutual support. Next, the UN, regional institutions (AU and ECOWAS) and other international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank serve to support the common goals. Inside the Western coalition, France and the U.S. lead other western nations within a support role. France because of

its experience in dealing with the region for long time. The U.S. because of its endurance in supporting counter terrorism initiatives.

However, the U.S footprint would be smaller than France's because of the America's pivot in Asia. On the other hand, the Sahel nations would have the lead in dealing with their affairs. Nigeria would be in lead, whereas Algeria is replaced by Mali in conducting counterterrorism measures. Such as replacement is necessary as first Algeria is more concern by the Maghreb than Sahel issues. Second, Algeria is on the edge of a historical regime change[107]. Third, more involvement of Algeria may exacerbate the ethnic tensions between Arab and Tuareg in North Mali, Niger and along Mauritanian Eastern border with Mali.

Whereas having Mali in the lead with Nigeria presents some significant advantages. First, the Northern regions of Mali from the border with Niger in the East, to the Mauritania border in West, not to mention the 1000 km that constitutes the Algerian border with Mali, are the rear bases and headquarters of most of the transnational threats which jeopardize the Sahel stability. Next, the central position of Mali with seven (7) borders has made the country the transitory area for drugs coming from Latin America, arms trafficking especially those from Libya, human trafficking with both illegal migration and westerns nationals kidnaping networks and more.

Lastly, although some friction points may still exist, this scheme of cooperation as shown above seems suitable and acceptable because it is built on the Sahel and Western

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[107] The current Algerian president Abdel Aziz Bouteflika who is now running is fourth mandate is sick and may not be able to run an over mandate. Political observers believes his depart will cause some struggles for power in Algeria.

nations strategic converging elements. It is feasible because it mitigates the larger friction points between all actors.

<center>Ends ways means–risks</center>

To stabilize the Sahel region there is a need for an integrated strategy, which would, enable lasting development, further future mutual interests between the Sahel nations, and help the Sahel nations grow enough to take charge of their future. Such an integrated strategy for Sahel should be within a synergy framework in order to be effective against the immediate threats, flexible enough to adjust the near future challenges, and efficient to enable a lasting commitment of stakeholders. Therefore, this study recommends a coalition form with Nigeria, Mali, the U.S and France with a aim to advance security and stability in the Sahel while ensuring lasting economic development and furthering Sahel and West mutual interests. This coalition will act according to the Afro-constructivism principles in which the two Sahel nations of Nigeria and Mali would take the lead of any direct military actions against the VEOs. Whereas the U.S and France will assist them and support their military actions, implement their political and economic and social reforms as long as those reforms are feasible, acceptable and subscribe to advancement of both Sahel and West mutual interests. Such a combination is beneficial because having the two most involved Sahel countries in the lead would help those countries leverage the experiences they gained from being constantly attacked and severely hit by terrorism. They would be more effective than any other external actor. Plus, defeating Boko Haram from Nigeria and AQIM and allies from Mali would be a decisive step in stabilizing the entire Sahel, the Maghreb and western interests. Having the Western nations in support roles constitute the second major benefit as in time of

<center>79</center>

budget constraints the Western nations could achieve their desired endstate for Sahel

without getting too much involved and taking any direct actions, which might get them,

commit in another complex security issue for years. In fact, the U.S is shifting its focus to

Asia and would reduce its footprints anywhere else. France undergoes some economic

issues and has already started reduced its forces deployed in the Sahel. Operation

Barkhane, for instance holds only 3000 men, about 20 helicopters, 200 logistic vehicles,

200 armored vehicles, 6 fighter jets, 3 drones and about 10 transport airplanes to deal

with any major security and terrorist crisis from Chad to Niger including Central Africa,

Mali, Burkina Faso and Mauritania.[108]

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[108] Minisère de la Defense Francaise, *lancement de l'opération BARKHANE*, August 2014, accessed 30 March 2016, http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/ actualites/lancement-de-l-operation-barkhane.
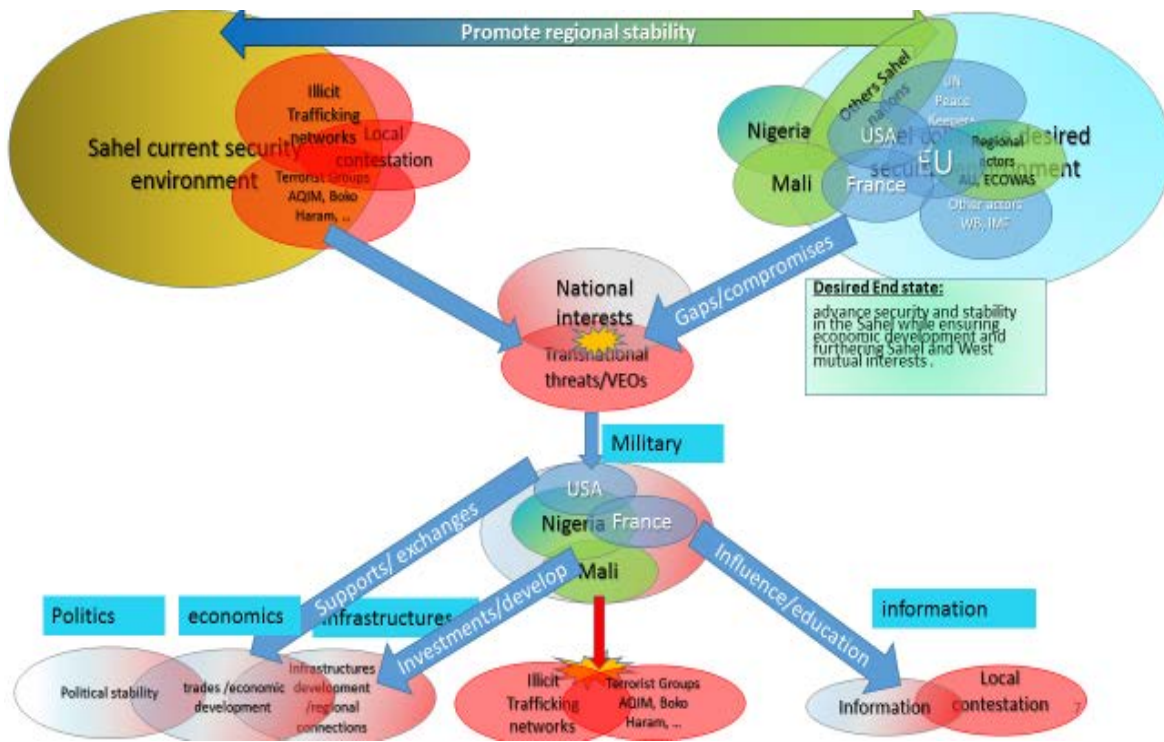
Figure 10. ADM Sahel Region

Source: Created by author.

The figure above shows the Sahel overall situation in an Army Design Methodology model (ADM). The top left hand side depicts the Sahel current security environment with local contestation movements such the MNLA in Mali mingled with the illicit trafficking and regional terrorists' networks. This nexus compound with the Sahel nations other issues (governance, military, economic, infrastructure) translate into transnational threats throughout the region and jeopardize both the Sahel and Western nations 'national interests. On the top right hand side, a coalition for Sahel formed by the Sahel nations with Mali and Nigeria in lead for direct actions. Whereas the western nations such as France and the U.S. assist and support. This coalition is based on a consensus, which mitigates the gaps between stakeholders while advancing regional

security, stability, enduring economic development and Sahel and West mutual interests.

In this perspective, the figure below represents an example of strategic approach for
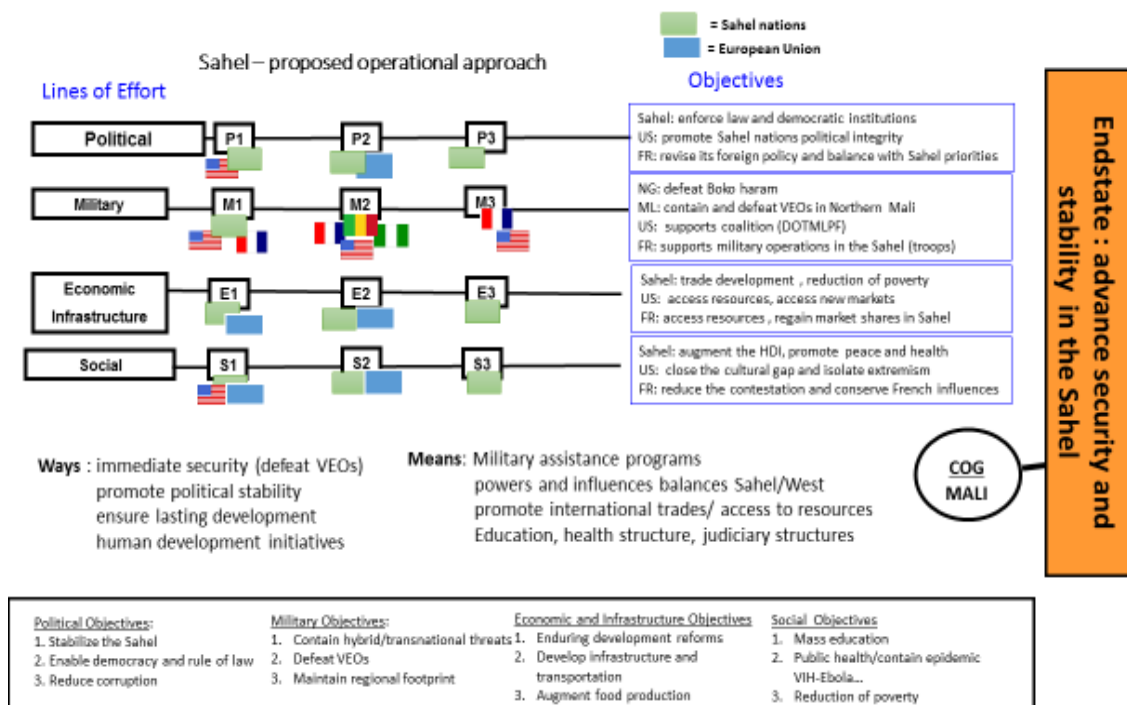
Sahel.

Figure 11. Sahel- proposed operational approach

Source: Created by author.

As shown in the figure above the military options, especially defeating the VEOs

in the Sahel and Boko Haram constitute the main converging interests. All actors see the

containment and defeat of VEOs as a priority; hence, the military line of effort from the

author's point of view should be the primary area of cooperation between the Sahel,

France and the U.S. in order to achieve the common strategic endstate. In fact, as

mentioned earlier the Northern regions of Mali not only constitute a converging node for

lines of communications (LOC) between the Sub-Saharan African countries and the Maghreb, they also represent the COG for VEOs. the central position of Mali with seven (7) borders has made the country the transitory area for the drugs coming from Latina Americas, arms trafficking especially those from Libya, human trafficking with both illegal migration and westerns nationals kidnaping networks and more. It then becomes essential to regain full control of Northern Mali in order to consolidate the eventual achievements on political, economic, social and infrastructure domains.

On the political perspective, the Sahel coalition efforts will focus on stabilizing the Sahel by enabling transparent democracy, rule of law and reducing corruption. The Sahel economic and infrastructure developments will build on the security and political stability achievements. As for social conditions, they should improve as Sahel nations develop and offer proper secure and stable environment.

As eluded to earlier, any future Sahel strategy has to take into account the Sahel states immediate security needs. Once relieved from immediate threats, Sahel nations should be able to participate along with their Westerns counterparts in structural projects which should advance mutual national interests within the region.

The study demonstrated that two of the major conditions for success are: synergy of effort through a Sahel/western coalition and Sahel countries should take the lead supported by Western countries. The study departed from the fact that the U.S. and France are the countries to represent the Western interests in the Sahel. The former because of its planning and organizational capabilities, its experiences, assets and levers on the international scheme. The latter because of its knowledge of the environment,

proximity of its military bases, political influences, and power projection capabilities.[109]

Then, throughout the research epically after the PMESII analysis of the Sahel countries,

the study determined that first the Sahel countries have to play the main role for this

Sahel strategy to meet the goals, and second the study found that Nigeria and Mali are the

best suited to play regional key partner roles.

Nigeria, because of its democratic stability, its economic and military powers, and

its growing influence in West Africa, presents the least development and technological

gap with the Western countries which combine with the Nigerian understanding of the

Sahel environment would allow Nigeria to easily take on the western know-how and

translate then into tangible results in the Sahel. However, because the VEOs COG is in

Northern Mali, Nigeria's location may constitute an operational disadvantage. In fact, the

distance between Nigeria's capital and North Mali where the VEOs rear bases are and

illicit activities take place may limit Sahel coalition operations, impact the operations

momentum, and expose their LOCs.[110] Therefore, the study comes to the conclusion that

Mali should be the next Sahel country to play a regional key role in order to defeat VEOs,

and deter illicit trafficking in the region.

Thus putting together this study suggests the U.S., France, Nigeria and Mali form

the core of the Sahel strategy in order to secure and stabilize the region while furthering

mutual strategic interests.

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[109] Elisa Bellanger, "De «Serval» à «Barkhane»: La France Renforce Sa Présence Militaire En Afrique," Le Monde, 19 July 2014, accessed 10 May 2016, http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2014/07/19/la-france-plus-presente-que-jamais-en-afrique_4459144_4355770.html.

[110] Dale R. Sweetwood, "Securing Land Lines of Communication in Insurgent War" (Master's thesis, Command and General Staff College, 1969).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a multitude of factors influencing the future of the Sahel region. Characteristics presented throughout this study capture the most notable variables that will either contribute to development or retard the region. However, a deep and broad understanding of the Sahel security environment, as well as its tenets and logic behind this interaction, is critical in perspective of identifying future tendencies.

The significant degradation of the Sahel security environment during the last decade is closely tied to the actors' interactions and their approaches. The study showed that neither the Afro-pessimistic approaches nor the Afro-optimistic ones are suited to the Sahel environment and needs. In absolute, the Afro-constructivism is the best option to enable peaceful, secure and stable environment in the Sahel. However, if the Afro-constructivist school of thought and approaches seem suitable, its applicable could be problematic since some gaps in understanding the root causes of the issues, desired environments and approaches do exist despite the significant converging strategic interests. A future coalition could be rapidly form around those converging interests and come to a consensus as for establishing a common strategic endstate. As for now, the number of actors and resources engaged in the Sahel could help containing the VEOs advancing, as the Nigeria-Cameroon-Niger and Chad coalition proved to significantly reduce Boko Haram activities and nuisance abilities in their respective countries. However, in order to advance security and stability in the Sahel while ensuring lasting economic development and furthering Sahel and West mutual interests, there is a need of creating a synergy around common interests ,mutually implementing stakeholders

'political decision and reforms , and leveraging their assets. This can be achieved through a coalition for Sahel. This coalition based on the Afro-constructivist principles in which, the Sahel nations will have the lead and the Western ones in support roles. For this coalition to be successful and replicable to all the Sahel countries even the Maghreb, it has to depart from the converging interests and urgent needs such secure the region through defeating the VEOs to extend to political, economic, social, infrastructures, and information layers.

In addition, such security cooperation is possible and application in two essential conditions. First, the terms of cooperation and frameworks have to be clearly defined. Second, it has to be built on the stakeholders' consensus and common strategic endstate.

Throughout this study, the aim was to find out what the Sahel security environment looks like nowadays. How it has evolved throughout the period 2004-2014 in contrast with the current security activities. The aim was to detect any tendency and look for area of improvements. Then, this study found that first the Sahel is a complex security environment where states and non-states actors interact or compete to advance their strategic interests. That in the long run won't serve any actor. Therefore, security cooperation and advancing of a common strategic endstate based on actors' consensus and converging interests is essential. Last, the study recommends that
In a very short term, the coalition should grant a growing space to the Sahel current governments by hampering the vectors of Sahel hybrid threats such as VEOs activities, the development of illicit trafficking such as arms, drug. Such measures will contain the threats vectors and enable the Sahel states to break free from their crisis cycle (see figure 3). Simultaneously, Sahel leaders should be held more accounts for their local politics

and reforms, which have to adjust the need to relieve the Sahel and Western states from the immediate threats. This will first help in building and consolidating the trust cross-borders (regional aspects) and between the Sahel and Western nations (international aspects) while closing the gaps between the stakeholders. Second, the Sahel states once relived from the immediate pressures could project and work on achieving the medium and long term common strategic endstate.

At last, given the scope of this particular topic, this study did not cover in depth and broad all the questions, which appear along the research. Therefore, it would be interesting in future to expand on:

1. The appropriate manner and timeframe during which African partners' capabilities should be built.

2. What will be the benefit of changing France's current foreign policy and postures in the Sahel?

3. Should Mali shift from a republic system to a federal system?

4. Is the creation of region monetary system a viable economic option for the Sahel?

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